

**PRIVATE**  
**CORRESPONDENCE**  
**OF**  
**BENJAMIN FRANKLIN,**  
**LL.D. F.R.S. &c.**

**MINISTER PLENIPOTENTIARY FROM THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA**  
**AT THE COURT OF FRANCE, AND FOR THE TREATY OF PEACE**  
**AND INDEPENDENCE WITH GREAT BRITAIN, &c. &c.**

**EDITED BY HIS GRANDSON,**  
**WILLIAM TEMPLE FRANKLIN.**

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**IN TWO VOLUMES.**

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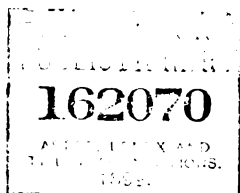
**VOL. I.**

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**LONDON:**  
**PUBLISHED FOR HENRY COLBURN,**  
**BY R. BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.**

**1833.**

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PRINTED BY A. J. VALPY, RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.

**P R E F A C E**  
**TO**  
**THE FIRST EDITION**  
**OF THE**  
**PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE.**

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FAMILIAR letters have been usually considered as exhibiting a portraiture of the human mind ; and though perhaps they are not always to be so regarded, especially in the intercourse of public men upon subjects involving particular interests and questions of national policy ; yet even from these documents the most valuable materials of history are drawn, and the secret springs of great events are disclosed. Hence it is, that a deserved importance has ever been attached to the correspondence of persons who have figured with distinction in political revolutions, and the foundation of new states :

for hereby are unfolded the motives of individuals, and the influence of parties; from whose pertinacity and intrigues proceed conflicts, projects, and establishments which the agitators never contemplated, and which the most sagacious observers of human nature could not have anticipated.

Among the changes that have taken place in the condition of political society, the separation of the American colonies from the parent country has been by far the most prolific and extensive in its effects of any in the history of modern ages.

It is presumed, therefore, that little need be said on the value of the correspondence of DR. FRANKLIN, whose extraordinary abilities as a statesman were felt and acknowledged in both countries, and by persons of opposite sentiments. But what renders his letters on the public concerns in which he was engaged peculiarly interesting, is the spirit of candour that runs through the whole of them, and the style of simplicity by which they are recommended as models of epistolary composition, and stamped beyond all question as authorities of the first character; though certainly not written with a view to publication. Here will be seen to equal advantage, the philosopher and the man of business, the moralist and negotiator, the profound



legislator, and the familiar friend, who opens his mind and delivers his sentiments with the same ingenuousness on matters of science and policy, the conduct of private life, and the interests of nations. The correspondence contained in this collection, is indeed a store of the soundest lessons of practical wisdom upon subjects of universal moment, and it is also a repository of information which will afford the best instruction to politicians, and will prove a sure guide to the future historian, who shall undertake the task of recording the several stages that have led to the establishment of American Independence, with the consequences of that event upon the states of Europe. The MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE, and the PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE of DR. FRANKLIN, will show much more clearly the great chain on which the fate of nations depends, than the debates in senates, the cabals of cabinets, or the details of battles: and to an Englishman, the Letters, now for the first time published, will be curious and important in a very high degree, as throwing a strong light upon the early part of the reign of George III., and upon the characters of those persons who had a principal share in the councils which produced the dismem-

berment of the British empire, and the creation of a power, which, from being a dependent state, has become its most formidable rival.

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## DR. FRANKLIN'S MEMOIRS

Consist altogether of Six Volumes octavo. They are divided into Three Parts; each Part being published and sold separately; viz.

Vols. 1 and 2. Containing the Life.

Vols. 3 and 4. ——— Private Correspondence.

Vols. 5 and 6. ——— Select Works, including many published for the first time.

## Private Correspondence.

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### CONTENTS OF VOLUME FIRST.

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#### PART I.

##### LETTERS ON MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS.

	PAGE
Dr. Franklin to the Rev. George Whitfield, June 6, 1753	1
to Miss Stevenson, May 16, 1760 . . .	4
to John Baskerville, <i>Printer</i> , 1760 . . .	5
to John Alleyne, esq. Aug. 9, 1768 . . .	7
to Michael Collinson, esq. 1768 or 69 . . .	9
to Michael Hillegas, esq. March 17, 1770 . . .	11
to Samuel Rhoads, esq. June 26, 1770 . . .	12
to Governor Franklin, Aug. 19, 1772 . . .	14
to Mr. Anthony Benezet, Aug. 22, 1772 . . .	15
to Dr. Priestley, Sept. 19, 1772 . . .	16
to the Rev. Dr. Mather, July 7, 1773 . . .	17
to Samuel Danforth, esq. July 25, 1773 . . .	19
to His Most Serene Highness Don Gabriel of Bourbon, Dec. 12, 1775 . . .	19
to Dr. Priestley, Jan. 27, 1777 . . .	21
to Mrs. Thompson, Feb. 8, 1777 . . .	22
to Dr. Cooper, May 1, 1777 . . .	25
to Mr. Winthrop, May 1, 1777 . . .	26
to Mr. Cushing, May 1, 1777 . . .	28

	PAGE
Dr. Franklin to Mr. Thomas Viny, May 4, 1779 . . . . .	29
to Mrs. Wright, May 4, 1779 . . . . .	29
to General Beckwith, May 17, 1779 . . . . .	31
to Sir Edward Newenham, bart. May 27, 1779 . . . . .	33
to General Gates, June 2, 1779 . . . . .	34
to Richard Bache, esq. (his son-in-law) June 2, 1779 . . . . .	35
to Mrs. Bache, (his daughter) June 3, 1779 . . . . .	38
to Mr. Bridgen, Oct. 2, 1779 . . . . .	41
to B. Vaughan, esq. Nov. 9, 1779 . . . . .	42
to Francis Hopkinson, esq. June 4, 1779 . . . . .	44
to Père Beccaria, Nov. 19, 1779 . . . . .	45
to Dr. Price, Feb. 6, 1780 . . . . .	47
to Dr. Priestley, Feb. 8, 1780 . . . . .	48
to General Washington, March 5, 1780 . . . . .	50
to the Chevalier De la Luzerne, March 5, 1780 . . . . .	52
to F. Hopkinson, esq. March 16, 1780 . . . . .	53
to Dr. Bond, March 16, 1780 . . . . .	54
to Dr. Cooper, March 16, 1780 . . . . .	55
to C. Griffin, esq. March 16, 1780 . . . . .	56
to William Carmichael, esq. June 17, 1780 . . . . .	57
to Dr. Fothergill, June 19, 1780 . . . . .	59
to Mr. Small, July 22, 1780 . . . . .	60
to Miss Georgiana Shipley, Oct. 8, 1780 . . . . .	62
to Dr. Price, Oct. 9, 1780 . . . . .	63
to Sir Grey Cooper, bart. Nov. 7, 1780 . . . . .	65
to Monsieur Nogaret, March 8, 1781 . . . . .	65
to the President of Congress, March 12, 1781 . . . . .	66
to the Marquis de la Fayette, March 14, 1781 . . . . .	69
to Mr. Hodgson, April 1, 1781 . . . . .	70
to W. Carmichael, esq. April 12, 1781 . . . . .	71
to Mons. Court de Gebelin, May 7, 1781 . . . . .	73
to the Rev. Dr. Cooper, May 15, 1781 . . . . .	76
to Messrs. D. Wendorp and Thomas Hope Heyhger, June 8, 1781 . . . . .	77
to W. Carmichael, esq. Aug. 24, 1781 . . . . .	78
to the Rev. W. Nixon, Sept. 5, 1781 . . . . .	79
to the Hon. Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, Sept. 13, 1781 . . . . .	80
to Richard Bache, esq. Sept. 13, 1781 . . . . .	80

	PAGE
Dr. Franklin to F. Hopkinson, esq. Sept. 13, 1781	82
to Edmund Burke, esq. M. P. Oct. 15, 1781	83
to Messrs. Kornmann, Nov. 21, 1781	84
to Gov. Pownall, Nov. 23, 1781	85
to Mrs. C. Edes, Dec. 13, 1781	85
to Miss Laurens, Dec. 29, 1781	87
to * * * * * Jan. 4, 1782	89
to His Excellency Gen. Washington, April 2, 1782	91
to the Chevalier de Chastelleux, April 6, 1782	93
to Gen. Washington, April 8, 1782	95
to the Rev. Dr. Priestley, June 7, 1782	95
to Dr. Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph, June 10, 1782	98
to Dr. Ingenhausz, June 21, 1782	100
to Miss Alexander, June 24, 1782	102
to Mr. Hutton, July 7, 1782	103
to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs of the United States, Sept. 3, 1782	105
to Sir Joseph Banks, Sept. 9, 1782	109
to F. Hopkinson, esq. Dec. 24, 1782	110
to * * *, Jan. 11, 1783	111
to David Barclay, esq. Jan. 8, 1783	113
to * * *, March 9, 1783	114
to Mrs. Hewson, Jan. 27, 1783	115
to the Right Hon. the Earl of Buchan, March 17, 1783	117
to William Jones, esq. March 17, 1783	118
to the Bishop of St. Asaph, (Dr. Shipley) March 17, 1783	120
to Sir Joseph Banks, July 27, 1783	122
to Dr. Price, Sept. 16, 1783	123
to Brand Hollis, esq. Oct. 5, 1783	125
to His Excellency John Jay, esq. Jan. 6, 1784	126
to Mrs. Bache, Jan. 26, 1784	128
to His Excellency Henry Laurens, esq. Feb. 12, 1784	136
to William Strahan, esq. Feb. 16, 1784	138
to Henry Laurens, esq. March 12, 1784	139
to Mr. Walter, (Printer, London) April 17, 1784	141
to Mr. Benjamin Webb, April 22, 1784	143
to the Rev. Dr. Mather, May 12, 1784	144
to Dr. Percival, July 17, 1784	146

	PAGE
Dr. Franklin to Messrs. Weems and Gant, citizens of the United States, July 18, 1784 . . .	147
to Benjamin Vaughan, esq. July 26, 1784 . . .	150
to Dr. Price, August 16, 1784 . . .	157
to the Right Hon. Lord Viscount Howe, August 18, 1784 . . .	159
to William Strahan, esq. August 19, 1784 . . .	160
to George Wheatley, esq. August 21, 1784 . . .	165
to * * * (supposed to Dr. Priestley), August 21, 1784 . . .	167
to B. Vaughan, esq. Sept. 7, 1784 . . .	168
to the same, April 21, 1785 . . .	169
to an engraver in Paris, (no date) . . .	170
to Dr. Ingenhausz, April 29, 1785 . . .	171
to Jonathan Williams, esq. May 19, 1785 . . .	174
to George Wheatley, esq. May 23, 1785 . . .	174
to * * * June 20, 1785 . . .	182
to Granville Sharp, esq. July 5, 1785 . . .	183
to David Hartley, esq. M. P. July 5, 1785 . . .	185
to His Excellency General Washington, Sept. 20, 1785 . . .	185
to Mr. and Mrs. Jay, Sept. 21, 1785 . . .	186
to David Hartley, esq. Oct. 27, 1785 . . .	187
to Monsieur Mathon de la Cour, Nov. 17, 1785 . . .	189
to Dr. Bancroft, Nov. 26, 1785 . . .	190
to Dr. Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph, Feb. 24, 1786 . . .	191
to Monsieur Le Veillard, of Passy, March 16, 1786 . . .	195
to Mrs. Hewson, May 6, 1786 . . .	196
to Noah Webster, esq. June 18, 1786 . . .	200
to William Cooke, esq. Aug. 12, 1786 . . .	200
to Colonel Hunter, Nov. 24, 1786 . . .	202
to Mr. Small, Feb. 19, 1787 . . .	203
to Monsieur Le Veillard, April 15, 1787 . . .	205
to the Duke de la Rochefoucault, April 15, 1787 . . .	207
to the Marquis De Chastelleux, April 17, 1787 . . .	210
to Messrs. the Abbés Chalot and Arnaud, April 17, 1787 . . .	211
to the Marquis de la Fayette, April 17, 1787 . . .	212
to Monsieur l'Abbé Morellet, April 22, 1787 . . .	214
to Mr. Jordain, (London) May 18, 1787 . . .	216
to George Wheatley, esq. May 18, 1787 . . .	218
to Mr. Small, Sept. 28, 1787 . . .	221
to Count De Buffon, Nov. 19, 1787 . . .	223

	PAGE
Dr. Franklin to * * *, Dec. 15, 1787 . . .	224
to Monsieur Le Veillard, Feb. 17, 1788 . . .	225
to the Editors of the Pennsylvania Gazette, March 30, 1788 . . .	227
to Monsieur Le Veillard, April 22, 1788 . . .	230
to Madame Lavoisier, Oct. 23, 1788 . . .	232
to Dr. Ingenhausz, Oct. 24, 1788 . . .	233
to Benjamin Vaughan, esq. Oct. 24, 1788 . . .	235
to Mrs. Partridge, Nov. 26, 1788 . . .	237
to Mrs. Mecom, (Dr. Franklin's sister) Nov. 26, 1788 . . .	237
to Mr. Small, Feb. 17, 1789 . . .	238
to Mrs. Greene, March 2, 1789 . . .	240
to Miss Catherine Louisa Shipley, April 27, 1789 . . .	241
to the Rev. Dr. Price, May 31, 1789 . . .	242
to Benjamin Vaughan, esq. June 3, 1789 . . .	243
to Mr. Wright, Nov. 4, 1789 . . .	244
to Dr. Rush of Philadelphia, (no date: supposed to be in 1789) . . .	247
to Samuel More, esq. Nov. 5, 1789 . . .	247
to Mr. Small, Nov. 5, 1789 . . .	248
to Monsieur Le Roy, of Paris, Nov. 13, 1789 . . .	250
to David Hartley, esq. Dec. 4, 1789 . . .	251
to Mrs. Mecom, Dec. 17, 1789 . . .	252
to Noah Webster, esq. Dec. 26, 1789 . . .	253
to Dr. Stiles, March 9, 1790 . . .	261
to * * * * * (without date) enclosed in the above . . .	264

## PART II.

## POLITICAL CORRESPONDENCE.

Dr. Franklin to Joseph Galloway, esq. Speaker of the house of assembly of Pennsylvania, June 13, 1767 . . .	267
to the same, August 8, 1767 . . .	272
to Governor Franklin, August 28, 1767 . . .	277
to the same, Nov. 25, 1767 . . .	279
to Joseph Galloway, esq. Dec. 1, 1767 . . .	283

	PAGE
Dr. Franklin to Mr. Ross, Dec. 12, 1767 . . .	285
to Governor Franklin, Dec. 19, 1767 . . .	286
Governor Pownall to Dr. Franklin . . .	287
Minutes on the back of foregoing, by Dr. Franklin . . .	288
Dr. Franklin to Governor Franklin, Jan. 9, 1768 . . .	289
to Joseph Galloway, esq. Jan. 9, 1768 . . .	290
to the same, Feb. 17, 1768 . . .	291
to Thomas Wharton, esq. Feb. 20, 1768 . . .	295
to Governor Franklin, March 13, 1768 . . .	297
to the Committee of Correspondence, Pennsylvania, March 13, 1768 . . .	302
to Joseph Galloway, esq. March 13, 1768 . . .	303
to the Committee of Correspondence, Pennsylvania, April 16, 1768 . . .	305
to Governor Franklin, April 16, 1768 . . .	306
to Mr. Ross, May 14, 1768 . . .	307
to Joseph Galloway, esq. May 14, 1768 . . .	309
to Governor Franklin, July 2, 1768 . . .	310
to Joseph Galloway, esq. July 2, 1768 . . .	316
to * * * London, Nov. 28, 1768 . . .	318
to Monsieur Dubourg, Oct. 2, 1770 . . .	319
to Governor Franklin, Aug. 17, 1772 . . .	320
to the same, August 19, 1772 . . .	322
to Joseph Galloway, esq. August 22, 1772 . . .	325
to the same, Dec. 2, 1772 . . .	326
to Thomas Cushing, esq. Dec. 2, 1772 . . .	328
to the same, Jan. 5, 1773 . . .	331
to Governor Franklin, Feb. 14, 1773 . . .	334
to the Hon. Thomas Cushing, March 9, 1773 . . .	335
to the same, April 3, 1773 . . .	336
to Governor Franklin, April 6, 1773 . . .	336
to the Hon. Thomas Cushing, May 6, 1773 . . .	338
to the same, June 2, 1773 . . .	342
to the same, June 4, 1773 . . .	343
to the same, July 7, 1773 . . .	344
to the same, July 7, 1773 . . .	347
to the Rev. Dr. Mather, July 7, 1773 . . .	355
to Dr. Cooper, July 7, 1773 . . .	356
to Governor Franklin, July 14, 1773 . . .	358



	PAGE
Dr. Franklin to Mr. Winthrop, July 25, 1773 . . .	362
to the Hon. Thomas Cushing, July 25, 1773 . . .	363
to Dr. Cooper, July 25, 1773 . . .	364
to the Hon. Thomas Cushing, August 24, 1773 . . .	365
to Governor Franklin, Sept. 1, 1773 . . .	366
to the Hon. Thomas Cushing, Sept. 12, 1773 . . .	368
PRUSSIAN EDICT, (enclosed in the foregoing letter) . . .	369
to Governor Franklin, Oct. 6, 1773 . . .	374
to the Hon. Thomas Cushing, Nov. 1, 1773 . . .	377
to Joseph Galloway, esq. Nov. 3, 1773 . . .	379
to Governor Franklin, Nov. 3, 1773 . . .	380
to the Hon. Thomas Cushing, Jan. 5, 1774 . . .	381
to Governor Franklin, Jan. 5, 1774 . . .	383
to the Printer of the Public Advertiser . . .	384
to the same . . .	392
to the same, under the signature of "A Londoner" . . .	393
to Dr. Priestley, May 16, 1775 . . .	398
to the same, July 7, 1775 . . .	399
to the same, Oct. 3, 1775 . . .	401
to Dr. Price, or David Hartley, esq. Oct. 3, 1775 . . .	402
to M. Dumas, in Holland, Dec. 9, 1775 . . .	403
to John Hancock, esq. President of Congress, Dec. 8, 1776 . . .	408
to the Secret Committee of Congress, Dec. 8, 1776 . . .	410
to the same, Jan. 4, 1777 . . .	411
to David Hartley, esq. Oct. 14, 1777 . . .	412
to Mr. Hutton, Feb. 1, 1778 . . .	416
to the same, Feb. 12, 1778 . . .	418
to David Hartley, esq. Feb. 12, 1778 . . .	419
to the same, Feb. 26, 1778 . . .	422
to Mr. Hutton, March 24, 1778 . . .	425
to William Pulteney, esq. M. P. March 30, 1778 . . .	426
William Alexander, esq. to Dr. Franklin, April 4, 1778 . . .	428
Dr. Franklin to Dr. Bancroft, April 16, 1778 . . .	428
to his Excellency Jos. Reed, esq. March 19, 1780 . . .	428
Certificate of William Alexander, esq. March 19, 1780 . . .	430
William Alexander, esq. to Dr. Franklin, March 19, 1780 . . .	431
Dr. Franklin to Count de Vergennes, April 24, 1778 . . .	431
Count de Vergennes to Dr. Franklin, April 25, 1778 . . .	434

	PAGE
D. Hartley, esq. to Dr. Franklin, April 29, 1778 .	435
Dr. Franklin in answer to the foregoing, April 29, 1778 .	435
Anonymous to Dr. Franklin, May 20, 1778 .	436
Dr. Franklin, <i>in answer to a letter from Brussels</i> , July 1, 1778	436
to James Lovell, esq. July 22, 1778 . . .	443
<i>in answer to the propositions of quitting the alliance with</i> <i>France</i> , Feb. 3, 1779 . . .	449
to David Hartley, esq. Feb. 22, 1779 . . .	452
to the same, March 21, 1779 . . .	453
to Dr. Cooper, April 22, 1779 . . .	454

PRIVATE CORRESPONDENCE  
OF  
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

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PART I.  
LETTERS ON MISCELLANEOUS SUBJECTS.

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TO GEORGE WHITFIELD.\* (*The Preacher.*)

SIR,

Philadelphia, June 6, 1753.

I RECEIVED your kind letter of the 2d instant, and am glad to hear that you increase in strength: I hope you will continue mending till you recover your former health and firmness. Let me know whether you still use the cold bath, and what effect it has.

As to the kindness you mention, I wish it could have been of more service to you.† But if it had, the only thanks I should desire is, that you would always be equally ready to serve any other person that may need your assistance, and so let good offices go round; for mankind are all of a family.

For my own part, when I am employed in serving

\* One of the founders of the Methodists; born at Gloucester, 1714, died in New England, 1770. See a full account of him in *MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE*, Part ii. p. 84, 4to ed.—P. 161, 8vo. Vol. 1.

† Dr. Franklin had relieved Mr. Whitfield in a paralytic case, by the application of electricity.

others, I do not look upon myself as conferring favors, but as paying debts. In my travels, and since my settlement, I have received much kindness from men, to whom I shall never have any opportunity of making the least direct return ; and numberless mercies from God, who is infinitely above being benefited by our services. Those kindnesses from men I can therefore only return on their fellow-men, and I can only shew my gratitude for these mercies from God, by a readiness to help his other children, and my brethren. For I do not think that thanks and compliments, though repeated weekly, can discharge our real obligations to each other, and much less those to our Creator. You will see in this my notion of good works, that I am far from expecting to merit heaven by them. By heaven we understand a state of happiness, infinite in degree, and eternal in duration : I can do nothing to deserve such rewards. He that for giving a draught of water to a thirsty person, should expect to be paid with a good plantation, would be modest in his demands, compared with those who think they deserve heaven for the little good they do on earth. Even the mixed imperfect pleasures we enjoy in this world, are rather from God's goodness than our merit : how much more such happiness of heaven ! For my part, I have not the vanity to think I deserve it, the folly to expect it, nor the ambition to desire it ; but content myself in submitting to the will and disposal of that God who made me, who has hitherto preserved and blessed me, and in whose fatherly goodness I may well confide, that he will never make me miserable ; and that even the afflictions I may at any time suffer shall tend to my benefit.

The faith you mention has certainly its use in the world : I do not desire to see it diminished, nor would I endeavour to lessen it in any man. But I wish it were more productive of good works than I have generally seen it : I mean real good works ; works of kindness, charity, mercy, and public spirit ; not holiday-keeping, sermon-reading, or hearing ; performing church ceremonies, or making long prayers, filled with flatteries and compliments, despised even by wise men, and much less capable of pleasing the Deity. The worship of God is a duty ; the hearing and reading of sermons may be useful ; but if men rest in hearing and praying, as too many do, it is as if a tree should value itself on being watered and putting forth leaves, though it never produced any fruit.

Your great Master thought much less of these outward appearances and professions than many of his modern disciples. He preferred the *doers* of the word to the mere *hearers* ; the son that seemingly refused to obey his father, and yet performed his commands, to him that professed his readiness but neglected the work ; the heretical but charitable Samaritan, to the uncharitable though orthodox priest, and sanctified Levite : and those who gave food to the hungry, drink to the thirsty, raiment to the naked, entertainment to the stranger, and relief to the sick, though they never heard of his name, he declares shall in the last day be accepted ; when those who cry Lord ! Lord ! who value themselves upon their faith, though great enough to perform miracles, but have neglected good works, shall be rejected. He professed that he came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance ; which implied

his modest opinion that there were some in his time who thought themselves so good, that they need not hear even him for improvement; but now-a-days; we have scarce a little parson that does not think it the duty of every man within his reach to sit under his petty ministrations; and that whoever omits them offends God. I wish to such more humility, and to you health and happiness; being

Your friend and servant, B. FRANKLIN.

TO MISS STEVENSON, AT WANSTEAD.

Craven Street, May 16, 1760.

I send my good girl the books I mentioned to her last night. I beg her to accept of them as a small mark of my esteem and friendship. They are written in the familiar easy manner for which the French are so remarkable, and afford a good deal of philosophic and practical knowledge unembarrassed with the dry mathematics, used by more exact reasoners, but which is apt to discourage young beginners.

I would advise you to read with a pen in your hand, and enter in a little book short hints of what you find that is curious, or that may be useful; for this will be the best method of imprinting such particulars in your memory, where they will be ready, either for practice on some future occasion, if they are matters of utility, or at least to adorn and improve your conversation, if they are rather points of curiosity. And as many of the terms of science are such as you cannot have met with in your common reading, and may therefore be unacquainted with, I think it would be well for you to have a good dictionary at hand, to consult immediately when you

meet with a word you do not comprehend the precise meaning of. This may at first seem troublesome and interrupting ; but it is a trouble that will daily diminish, as you will daily find less and less occasion for your dictionary, as you become more acquainted with the terms ; and in the mean time you will read with more satisfaction, because with more understanding. When any point occurs, in which you would be glad to have farther information than your book affords you, I beg you would not in the least apprehend that I should think it a trouble to receive and answer your questions. It will be a pleasure, and no trouble. For though I may not be able, out of my own little stock of knowledge, to afford you what you require, I can easily direct you to the books where it may most readily be found. Adieu, and believe me ever, my dear friend,

Yours affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO JOHN BASKERVILLE.\* (*The Printer.*)

DEAR SIR,

Craven Street, London, 1760.

Let me give you a pleasant instance of the prejudice some have entertained against your work.

\* JOHN BASKERVILLE, the celebrated type-founder and printer, was born in 1706, at Wolverley, in the county of Worcester. Having a small estate of about sixty pounds a-year, he was not bred to any profession ; but in 1726 he became a schoolmaster at Birmingham, which he continued many years. Afterwards he entered upon the japanning business, which succeeded so well as to enable him to purchase a country-house and set up his carriage ; each pannel of which was a distinct picture, and the whole might be considered as a pattern-card of his trade. In 1750 he began business as a type-founder, on which he spent many hundreds before he could produce a letter to please himself. By per-

Soon after I returned, discoursing with a gentleman concerning the artists of Birmingham, he said you would be a means of blinding all the readers in the nation; for the strokes of your letters being too thin and narrow, hurt the eye, and he could never read a line of them without pain. "I thought," said I, "you were going to complain of the gloss of the paper, some object to." "No, no," said he, "I have heard that mentioned, but it is not that; it is in the form and cut of the letters themselves: they have not that height and thickness of the stroke which makes the common printing so much the more comfortable to the eye."—You see this gentleman was a *connoisseur*. In vain I endeavored to support your character against the charge: he knew what he felt, and could see the reason of it, and several other gentlemen among his friends had made the same observation, &c. Yesterday he called to visit me, when, mischievously bent to try his judgment, I stepped into my closet, tore off the top of Mr. Caslon's\* specimen, and produced it to him as yours, brought with me from Birmingham, saying I had been examining it since he spoke to me, and could not for my

severance he overcame all obstacles, and in 1756 published an edition of Virgil in quarto, which was followed by *Paradise Lost*, the Bible, Common Prayer, and several other works. In 1765 he applied to Dr. Franklin, then at Paris, to sound the literati there respecting the purchase of his types, but the proposal was not accepted. They were many years after purchased by the celebrated M. De Beaumarchais, and employed in the printing his edition of the works of Voltaire. Baskerville died at Birmingham, in 1775; and as he had an aversion to church-yards, he was by his own direction buried in a mausoleum erected on his own grounds.

\* An eminent type-engraver and letter-founder in London.



life perceive the disproportion he mentioned, desiring him to point it out to me. He readily undertook it, and went over the several founts, showing me every where what he thought instances of that disproportion ; and declared, that he could not then read the specimen without feeling very strongly the pain he had mentioned to me. I spared him that time, the confusion of being told that these were the types he had been reading all his life with so much ease to his eyes ; the types his adored Newton is printed with, on which he has pored not a little ; nay, the very types his own book is printed with (for he is himself an author) ; and yet never discovered this painful disproportion in them till he thought they were yours.

I am, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO JOHN ALLEYNE, ESQ.

DEAR JACK,

Craven Street, August 9, 1768.

You desire, you say, my impartial thoughts on the subject of an early marriage, by way of answer to the numberless objections that have been made by numerous persons to your own. You may remember, when you consulted me on the occasion, that I thought youth on both sides to be no objection. Indeed, from the marriages that have fallen under my observation, I am rather inclined to think that early ones stand the best chance of happiness. The temper and habits of the young are not yet become so stiff and uncomplying, as when more advanced in life : they form more easily to each other, and hence many occasions of disgust are removed. And if youth has less of that prudence which is necessary to manage a family, yet the parents and

elder friends of young married persons are generally at hand to afford their advice, which amply supplies that defect; and by early marriage, youth is sooner formed to regular and useful life; and possibly some of those accidents or connexions, that might have injured the constitution, or reputation, or both, are thereby happily prevented. Particular circumstances of particular persons may possibly sometimes make it prudent to delay entering into that state; but in general, when nature has rendered our bodies fit for it, the presumption is in nature's favor, that she has not judged amiss in making us desire it. Late marriages are often attended, too, with that inconvenience, that there is not the same chance that the parents shall live to see their offspring educated. "*Late children,*" says the Spanish proverb, "*are early orphans.*" A melancholy reflection to those whose case it may be. With us in America, marriages are generally in the morning of life; our children are therefore educated and settled in the world by noon; and thus, our business being done, we have an afternoon and evening of cheerful leisure to ourselves: such as our friend at present enjoys. By these early marriages we are blessed with more children; and from the mode among us, founded by nature, of every mother suckling and nursing her own child, more of them are raised. Thence the swift progress of population among us, unparalleled in Europe. In fine, I am glad you are married, and congratulate you most cordially upon it. You are now in the way of becoming a useful citizen; and you have escaped the unnatural state of celibacy for life—the fate of many here, who never intended it, but who having too long post-

poned the change of their condition, find, at length, that it is too late to think of it, and so live all their lives in a situation that greatly lessens a man's value. An odd volume of a set of books bears not the value of its proportion to the set: what think you of the odd half of a pair of scissors? it can't well cut any thing; it may possibly serve to scrape a trencher.

Pray make my compliments and best wishes acceptable to your bride. I am old and heavy, or I should ere this have presented them in person. I shall make but small use of the old man's privilege, that of giving advice to younger friends. Treat your wife always with respect; it will procure respect to you, not only from her, but from all that observe it. Never use a slighting expression to her, even in jest; for slights in jest, after frequent bandyings, are apt to end in angry earnest. Be studious in your profession, and you will be learned. Be industrious and frugal, and you will be rich. Be sober and temperate, and you will be healthy. Be in general virtuous, and you will be happy. At least you will, by such conduct, stand the best chance for such consequences. I pray God to bless you both; being ever your affectionate friend,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MICHAEL COLLINSON, ESQ.

DEAR SIR, [No date.] (supposed to be in 1768 or 1769.)

Understanding that an account of our dear departed friend, Mr. Peter Collinson,\* is intended to be given to the public, I cannot omit expressing my

\* Peter Collinson, F.R.S., a very celebrated botanist, was descended from a family of ancient standing in the county of Westmoreland, but born himself in 1693, in Clement's Lane, Lombard Street. His parents realised a handsome fortune by trade in Grace

approbation of the design. The characters of good men are exemplary, and often stimulate the well-disposed to an imitation, beneficial to mankind, and honorable to themselves. And as you may be unacquainted with the following instances of his zeal and usefulness in promoting knowledge, which fell within my observation, I take the liberty of informing you, that in 1730, a subscription library being set on foot at Philadelphia, he encouraged the design by making several very valuable presents to it, and procuring others from his friends: and as the library company had a considerable sum arising annually to be laid out in books, and needed a judicious friend in London to transact the business for them, he voluntarily and cheerfully undertook that service, and executed it for more than thirty years successively, assisting in the choice of books, and taking the whole care of collecting and shipping them, without ever charging or accepting any consideration for his trouble. The success of this library (greatly owing to his kind countenance and good advice) encouraged the erecting others in different places on the same plan; and it is supposed there are now upwards of thirty subsisting in the several colonies, which have contributed greatly to the

church Street, the bulk of which coming to Peter, who was the eldest son, he was enabled to follow his favorite pursuit of natural history. He had one of the finest gardens in England, at Peckham, in Surrey, whence he removed in 1749 to Mill Hill, in the parish of Hendon in Middlesex, where he died in 1768. Mr. Collinson kept up a correspondence with men of science in all parts of the world, and he sent the first electrical machine that was ever seen in America, as a present to the Philosophical Society at Philadelphia. He was also a liberal contributor to the public library of that city; and an intimate friend of Dr. Franklin, who received from him many hints and papers on the subject of electricity.

spreading of useful knowledge in that part of the world ; the books he recommended being all of that kind, and the catalogue of this first library being much respected and followed by those libraries that succeeded.

During the same time he transmitted to the directors of the library the earliest accounts of every new European improvement in agriculture and the arts, and every philosophical discovery ; among which, in 1745, he sent over an account of the new German experiments in electricity, together with a glass tube, and some directions for using it, so as to repeat those experiments. This was the first notice I had of that curious subject, which I afterwards prosecuted with some diligence, being encouraged by the friendly reception he gave to the letters I wrote to him upon it. Please to accept this small testimony of mine to his memory, for which I shall ever have the utmost respect ; and believe me, with sincere esteem, dear Sir,

Your most humble servant,      B. FRANKLIN.

TO MICHAEL HILLEGAS, ESQ. PHILADELPHIA.

DEAR SIR,

London, March 17, 1770.

I received your favor of November 25, and have made inquiries, as you desired, concerning the copper covering of houses. It has been used here in a few instances only, and the practice does not seem to gain ground. The copper is about the thickness of a common playing card, and though a dearer metal than lead, I am told that as less weight serves, on account of its being so much thinner, and as slighter woodwork in the roof is sufficient to support it, the roof is not dearer, on the whole, than one

covered with lead. It is said that hail and rain make a disagreeable drumming noise on copper; but this, I suppose, is rather fancy; for the plates being fastened to the rafters, must, in a great measure, deaden such sound. The first cost, whatever it is, will be all, as a copper covering must last for ages; and when the house decays, the plates will still have intrinsic worth. In Russia, I am informed, many houses are covered with plates of iron tinned, (such as our tin pots and other wares are made of,) laid on over the edges of one another, like tiles; and which, it is said, last very long; the tin preserving the iron from much decay by rusting. In France and the Low Countries I have seen many spouts or pipes for conveying the water down from the roofs of houses, made of the same kind of tin plates, soldered together; and they seem to stand very well.

With sincere regard, I am yours, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO SAMUEL RHOADS, ESQ.

DEAR FRIEND,

London, June 28, 1770.

It appears to me of great importance to build our dwelling-houses, if we can, in a manner more secure from danger by fire. We scarcely ever hear of fire in Paris. When I was there, I took particular notice of the construction of their houses, and I did not see how one of them could well be burnt. The roofs are slate or tile, the walls are stone, the rooms generally lined with stucco or plaster, instead of wainscot, the floors of stucco, or of six-sided tiles painted brown, or of flag stone, or of marble; if any floors were of wood, they were of oak wood, which

is not so inflammable as pine. Carpets prevent the coldness of stone or brick floors offending the feet in winter, and the noise of treading on such floors, overhead, is less inconvenient than on boards. The stairs too, at Paris, are either stone or brick, with only a wooden edge or corner for the step; so that, on the whole, though the Parisians commonly burn wood in their chimnies, a more dangerous kind of fuel than that used here, yet their houses escape extremely well, as there is little in a room that can be consumed by fire except the furniture; whereas in London, perhaps scarcely a year passes in which half a million of property and many lives are not lost by this destructive element. Of late, indeed, they begin here to leave off wainscoting their rooms, and instead of it cover the walls with stucco, often formed into pannels, like wainscot, which, being painted, is very strong and warm. Stone staircases too, with iron rails, grow more and more into fashion here. But stone steps cannot, in some circumstances, be fixed; and there, methinks, oak is safer than pine: and I assure you, that in many genteel houses here, both old and new, the stairs and floors are oak, and look extremely well. Perhaps solid oak for the steps would be still safer than boards; and two steps might be cut diagonally out of one piece. Excuse my talking to you on a subject with which you must be so much better acquainted than I am. It is partly to make out a letter, and partly in hope that by turning your attention to the point, some methods of greater security in our future building may be thought of and promoted by you, whose judgment I know has deservedly great weight with our fellow-citizens. For

though our town has not hitherto suffered very greatly by fire, yet I am apprehensive that some time or other, by a concurrence of unlucky circumstances, such as dry weather, hard frost, and high winds, a fire then happening may suddenly spread far and wide over our cedar roofs, and do us immense mischief. I am yours, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO GOVERNOR FRANKLIN,\* NEW JERSEY.

London, August 19, 1772.

\* \* \* In yours of May 14th you acquaint me with your indisposition, which gave me great concern. The resolution you have taken to use more exercise is extremely proper; and I hope you will steadily perform it. It is of the greatest importance to prevent diseases, since the cure of them by physic is so very precarious. In considering the different kinds of exercise, I have thought that the *quantum* of each is to be judged of, not by time or by distance, but by the degree of warmth it produces in the body: thus, when I observe if I am cold when I get into a carriage in a morning, I may ride all day without being warmed by it; that if on horseback my feet are cold, I may ride some hours before they become warm; but if I am ever so cold on foot, I cannot walk an hour briskly, without glowing from head to foot by the quickened circulation: I have been ready to say, (using round numbers without regard to exactness, but merely to make a great difference,) that there is more exercise in *one* mile's riding on horseback, than in

\* Dr. Franklin's son, to whom the first part of the MEMOIRS OF HIS LIFE is addressed.



*five* in a coach ; and more in *one* mile's walking on foot, than in *five* on horseback ; to which I may add, that there is more in walking *one* mile up and down stairs, than in *five* on a level floor.—The two latter exercises may be had within doors, when the weather discourages going abroad ; and the last may be had when one is pinched for time, as containing a great quantity of exercise in a handful of minutes. The dumb bell is another exercise of the latter compendious kind ; by the use of it I have in forty swings quickened my pulse from sixty to one hundred beats in a minute, counted by a second watch ; and I suppose the warmth generally increases with quickness of pulse.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MR. ANTHONY BENEZET,\* PHILADELPHIA.

DEAR FRIEND,

London, August 22, 1772.

I made a little extract from yours of April 27, of the number of slaves imported and perishing, with some close remarks on the hypocrisy of this country, which encourages such a detestable commerce by laws for promoting the Guinea trade ; while it piqued itself on its virtue, love of liberty, and the equity of its courts in setting free a single negro. This was inserted in the *London Chronicle of the 20th of June*

\* An American philanthropist. In 1767 he wrote a Caution to Great Britain and her Colonies, in a short representation of the calamitous state of the enslaved negroes in the British dominions. In 1772 he published Historical Accounts of Guinea ; with an Inquiry into the Rise and Progress of the Slave Trade, its nature and lamentable effects. This amiable man seemed to have nothing else at heart but the good of his fellow-creatures ; and the last act of his life was to take from his desk six dollars for a poor widow.

last.—I thank you for the Virginia address, which I shall also publish with some remarks. I am glad to hear that the disposition against keeping negroes grows more general in North America. Several pieces have been lately printed here against the practice, and I hope in time it will be taken into consideration and suppressed by the legislature. Your labors have already been attended with great effects: I hope therefore you and your friends will be encouraged to proceed: my hearty wishes of success attend you, being ever, my dear friend,

Yours affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO DR. PRIESTLEY.

DEAR SIR,

London, September 19, 1772.

In the affair of so much importance to you, wherein you ask my advice, I cannot, for want of sufficient premises, counsel you *what* to determine; but if you please, I will tell you *how*. When those difficult cases occur, they are difficult chiefly because, while we have them under consideration, all the reasons *pro* and *con* are not present to the mind at the same time; but sometimes one set present themselves; and at other times another, the first being out of sight. Hence the various purposes or inclinations that alternately prevail, and the uncertainty that perplexes us. To go over this, my way is, to divide half a sheet of paper by a line into two columns; writing over the one *pro*, and over the other *con*; then during three or four days' consideration, I put down under the different heads short hints of the different motives that at different times occur to me, *for* or *against* the measure. When I have thus got them all together in one view, I endeavor to estimate

their respective weights, and where I find two (one on each side) that seem equal, I strike them both out. If I find a reason *pro* equal to some *two* reasons *con*, I strike out the *three*. If I judge some *two* reasons *con* equal to some *three* reasons *pro*, I strike out the *five*; and thus proceeding, I find at length where the *balance* lies; and if after a day or two of farther consideration, nothing new that is of importance occurs on either side, I come to a determination accordingly. And though the weight of reasons cannot be taken with the precision of algebraic quantities, yet, when each is thus considered separately and comparatively, and the whole lies before me, I think I can judge better, and am less liable to make a rash step; and in fact I have found great advantage from this kind of equation, in what may be called *moral* or *prudential algebra*.

Wishing sincerely that you may determine for the best, I am ever, my dear friend,

Yours most affectionately, B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE REV. DR. MATHER.

REVEREND SIR,

London, July 7, 1773.

By a line of the 4th past, I sent you with it two pamphlets. I now add another, a spirited address to the bishops who opposed the dissenters' petition. It is written by a dissenting minister at York. There is preserved at the end of it a little fugitive piece of mine on the same occasion.

I perused your tracts with pleasure: I see you inherit all the various learning of your famous ancestors, *Cotton* and *Increase Mather*. The father, *Increase*, I once heard preach at the Old South Meeting for Mr. Pemberton; and remember his men-

tioning the death of "that wicked old persecutor of God's people, Lewis the XIV;" of which news had just been received; but which proved premature. I was some years afterwards at his house at the north end on some errand to him, and remember him sitting in an easy chair apparently very old and feeble. But *Cotton* I remember in the vigor of his preaching and usefulness.

You have made the most of your argument, to prove that America might be known to the ancients. There is another discovery of it claimed by the Norwegians, which you have not mentioned, unless it be under the words "of old viewed and observed," page 7. About twenty-five years since, Professor Kalm, a learned Swede, was with us in Pennsylvania. He contended that America was discovered by their northern people long before the time of Columbus; which I doubting, he drew up and gave me some time after, a note of those discoveries, which I send you enclosed. It is his own hand-writing, and his own English; very intelligible for the time he had been among us. The circumstances give the account a great appearance of authenticity. And if one may judge by the description of the winter, the country they visited should be southward of New England, supposing no change since that time of the climate. But if it be true, as Krantz, I think, and some other historians tell us, that old Greenland, once inhabited and populous, is now rendered uninhabited by ice, it should seem that the almost perpetual northern winter had gained ground to the southward; and if so, perhaps more northern countries might anciently have had vines, than can bear them in these days.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO SAMUEL DANFORTH, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

London, July 25, 1773.

I see by the papers that you continue to afford that public your services, which makes me almost ashamed of my resolutions for retirement. But this exile, though an honorable one,\* is become grievous to me, in so long a separation from my family, friends, and country, all which you happily enjoy; and long may you continue to enjoy them. I hope for the great pleasure of once more seeing and conversing with you; and though living on in one's children, as we both may do, is a good thing, I cannot but fancy it might be better to continue living ourselves at the same time. I rejoice, therefore, in your kind intentions of including me in the benefits of that inestimable *stone*, which curing all diseases (even old age itself), will enable us to see the future glorious state of our America, enjoying in full security her own liberties, and offering in her bosom a participation of them to all the oppressed of other nations. I anticipate the jolly conversation we and twenty more of our friends may have a hundred years hence on this subject, over that well replenished bowl at Cambridge commencement. I am, dear sir, for an age to come, and for ever, with sincere esteem and respect, your most obedient humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO HIS MOST SERENE HIGHNESS DON GABRIEL OF  
BOURBON.

ILLUSTRIOUS PRINCE,

Philadelphia, Dec. 12, 1775.

I have just received, through the hands of the

\* Dr. Franklin was at that time agent for several of the American colonies in Great Britain.

ambassador of Spain, the much esteemed present your most serene highness hath so kindly sent me, of your excellent version of Sallust.

I am extremely sensible of the honor done me, and beg you would accept my thankful acknowledgments. I wish I could send hence any American literary production worthy of your perusal; but as yet the muses have scarcely visited these remote regions. Perhaps, however, the proceedings of our American congress, just published, may be a subject of some curiosity at your court. I therefore take the liberty of sending your highness a copy, with some other papers which contain accounts of the successes wherewith Providence has lately favored us. Therein your wise politicians may contemplate the first efforts of a rising state, which seems likely soon to act a part of some importance on the stage of human affairs, and furnish materials for a future Sallust. I am very old, and can scarce hope to see the event of this great contest: but looking forward, I think I see a powerful dominion growing up here, whose interest it will be to form a close and firm alliance with Spain (their territories bordering), and who being united, will be able, not only to preserve their own people in peace, but to repel the force of all the other powers in Europe. It seems, therefore, prudent on both sides to cultivate a good understanding, that may hereafter be so useful to both; towards which a fair foundation is already laid in our minds, by the well-founded popular opinion entertained here of Spanish integrity and honor. I hope my presumption in hinting this will be pardoned. If in any thing on this side the globe I can render either service or pleasure to your royal highness, your com-

mands will make me happy. With the utmost esteem and veneration, I have the honor to be your Serene Highness's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO DR. PRIESTLEY.

DEAR SIR,

Paris, Jan. 27, 1777.

I rejoice to hear of your continual progress in those useful discoveries; I find that you have set all the philosophers of Europe at work upon *fixed air*; and it is with great pleasure I observe how high you stand in their opinion; for I enjoy my friends' fame as my own.

The hint you gave me jocularly, that you did not quite despair of the *philosopher's stone*, draws from me a request, that when you have found it, you will take care to lose it again; for I believe in my conscience that mankind are wicked enough to continue slaughtering one another as long as they can find money to pay the butchers. But of all the wars in my time, this on the part of England appears to me the wickedest; having no cause but malice against liberty, and the jealousy of commerce. And I think the crime seems likely to meet with its proper punishment; a total loss of her own liberty, and the destruction of her own commerce.

I suppose you would like to know something of the state of affairs in America. In all probability we shall be much stronger the next campaign than we were in the last; better armed, better disciplined, and with more ammunition. When I was at the camp before Boston,\* the army had not five rounds of powder a man; this was kept a secret even from

\* In October 1775.

our people. The world wondered that we so seldom fired a cannon: we could not afford it: but we now make powder in plenty.

To me it seems, as it has always done, that this war must end in our favor, and in the ruin of Britain, if she does not speedily put an end to it. An English gentleman here the other day, in company with some French, remarked, that it was folly in France not to make war immediately: *And in England*, replied one of them, *not to make peace*.

Do not believe the reports you hear of our internal divisions. We are, I believe, as much united as any people ever were, and as firmly. B. FRANKLIN.

TO MRS. THOMPSON, AT LISLE.

Paris, Feb. 8, 1777.

You are too early, *hussy*, as well as too saucy, in calling me *rebel*; you should wait for the event, which will determine whether it is a *rebellion* or only a *revolution*. Here the ladies are more civil; they call us *les Insurgens*; a character that usually pleases them: and methinks all other women who smart, or have smarted under the tyranny of a bad husband, ought to be fixed in *revolution* principles, and act accordingly.

In my way to Canada last spring, I saw dear Mrs. Barrow, at New York. Mr. Barrow had been from her two or three months to keep Governor Tyron, and other tories company on board the *Asia*, one of the king's ships which lay in the harbor; and in all that time that naughty man had not ventured once on shore to see her. Our troops were then pouring into the town, and she was packing up to leave it; fearing, as she had a large house, they would incom-



mode her, by quartering officers in it. As she appeared in great perplexity, scarce knowing where to go, I persuaded her to stay; and I went to the general officers then commanding there, and recommended her to their protection; which they promised and performed. On my return from Canada, where I was a piece of a governor (and I think a very good one) for a fortnight, and might have been so till this time, if your wicked army, enemies to all good government, had not come and driven me out, I found her still in quiet possession of her house. I inquired how our people had behaved to her; she spoke in high terms of the respectful attention they had paid her, and the quiet and security they had procured her. I said I was glad of it; and that if they had used her ill, I would have turned tory. "Then," said she, (with that pleasing gaiety so natural to her) "*I wish they had.*" For you must know she is a *toryess* as well as you, and can as flippanantly call *rebel*. I drank tea with her: we talked affectionately of you and our other friends the Wilkes's, of whom she had received no late intelligence. What became of her since, I have not heard. The street she lived in was some months after chiefly burnt down; but as the town was then, and ever since has been, in possession of the king's troops, I have had no opportunity of knowing whether she suffered any loss in the conflagration. I hope she did not, as if she did, I should wish I had not persuaded her to stay there. I am glad to learn from you that that unhappy, though deserving family, the W.'s, are getting into some business that may afford them subsistence. I pray that God will bless them, and that they may see happier days. Mr. Cheap's and Dr. H.'s good fortunes please me.

Pray learn, if you have not already learnt, like me, to be pleased with other people's pleasures, and happy with their happiness, when none occur of your own; then perhaps you will not so soon be weary of the place you chance to be in, and so fond of rambling to get rid of your *ennui*. I fancy you have hit upon the right reason of your being weary of St. Omers, viz. that you are out of temper, which is the effect of full living and idleness. A month in Bridewell, beating hemp, upon bread and water, would give you health and spirits, and subsequent cheerfulness and contentment, with every other situation. I prescribe that regimen for you, my dear, in pure good-will, without a fee. And let me tell you, if you do not get into temper, neither Brussels nor Lisle will suit you. I know nothing of the price of living in either of those places; but I am sure a single woman as you are might with economy upon two hundred pounds a-year maintain herself comfortably any where; and me into the bargain. Do not invite me in earnest, however, to come and live with you; for being posted here, I ought not to comply, and I am not sure I should be able to refuse. Present my respects to Mrs. Payne, and Mrs. Heathcot, for though I have not the honor of knowing them, yet as you say they are friends to the American cause, I am sure they must be women of good understanding. I know you wish you could see me, but as you can't, I will describe myself to you. Figure me in your mind as jolly as formerly, and as strong and hearty, only a few years older; very plainly dressed, wearing my thin grey straight hair, that peeps out under my only *coiffure*, a fine fur cap, which comes down my forehead almost to my spectacles. Think how this

must appear among the powdered heads of Paris! I wish every lady and gentleman in France would only be so obliging as to follow my fashion, comb their own heads as I do mine, dismiss their *friscurs*, and pay me half the money they paid to them. You see the gentry might well afford this, and I could then enlist these *friscurs* (who are at least 100,000), and with the money I would maintain them, make a visit with them to England, and dress the heads of your ministers and privy counsellors, which I conceive at present to be *un peu dérangées*. Adieu, madcap! and believe me ever, your affectionate friend, and humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. Don't be proud of this long letter. A fit of the gout, which has confined me five days, and made me refuse to see company, has given me a little time to trifle; otherwise it would have been very short, visitors and business would have interrupted: and perhaps, with Mrs. Barrow, you wish they had.

TO DR. COOPER, BOSTON.

Paris, May 1, 1771.

I thank you for your kind congratulations on my safe arrival here, and for your good wishes. I am, as you supposed, treated with great civility and respect by all orders of people; but it gives me still greater satisfaction to find that our being here is of some use to our country. On that head I cannot be more explicit at present.

I rejoice with you in the happy change of affairs in America last winter: I hope the same train of success will continue through the summer. Our enemies are disappointed in the number of additional troops they purposed to send over. What they have

been able to muster will not probably recruit their army to the state it was in the beginning of last campaign; and ours I hope will be equally numerous, better armed, and better clothed, than they have been heretofore.

All Europe is on our side of the question, as far as applause and good wishes can carry them. Those who live under arbitrary power do nevertheless approve of liberty, and wish for it: they almost despair of recovering it in Europe: they read the translations of our separate colony constitutions with rapture; and there are such numbers every where who talk of removing to America, with their families and fortunes, as soon as peace and our independence shall be established, that it is generally believed we shall have a prodigious addition of strength, wealth, and arts, from the emigrations of Europe; and it is thought, that to lessen or prevent such emigrations, the tyrannies established there must relax, and allow more liberty to their people. Hence it is a common observation here, that our cause is *the cause of all mankind*; and that we are fighting for their liberty in defending our own. It is a glorious task assigned us by Providence; which has, I trust, given us spirit and virtue equal to it, and will at last crown it with success.

I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,  
B. FRANKLIN.

TO MR. WINTHROP, BOSTON.

DEAR SIR,

Paris, May 1, 1777.

I forwarded your letter to Dr. Price, who was well lately; but his friends, on his account, were

under some apprehensions from the violence of government, in consequence of his late excellent publications in favor of liberty. I wish all the friends of liberty and man would quit that sink of corruption, and leave it to its fate.

The people of this country are almost unanimously in our favor. The government has its reasons for postponing a war, but is making daily the most diligent preparations; wherein Spain goes hand in hand. In the mean time, America has the whole harvest of prizes made upon the British commerce; a kind of monopoly that has its advantages, as by affording greater encouragement to cruisers, it increases the number of our seamen, and thereby augments our naval power.

The conduct of those princes of Germany, who have sold the blood of their people, has subjected them to the contempt and odium of all Europe. The Prince of Anspach, whose recruits mutinied and refused to march, was obliged to disarm and fetter them, and drive them to the sea-side by the help of his guards, himself attending in person. In his return he was publicly hooted by mobs through every town he passed in Holland, with all sorts of reproachful epithets. The King of Prussia's humor of obliging those princes to pay him the same toll per head for the men they drive through his dominions, as used to be paid him for their *cattle*, because they were sold as such, is generally spoken of with approbation; as containing a just reproof of those tyrants. I send you enclosed one of the many satires that have appeared on this occasion.

With best wishes of prosperity to yourself and to

my dear country, where I hope to spend my last years, and lay my bones,

I am ever, dear Sir, your affectionate friend, and  
humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MR. CUSHING, BOSTON.

SIR,

Paris, May 1, 1777.

I thank you for your kind congratulations on my arrival here, and shall be happy in finding that our negotiations on this side the water are of effectual service to our country.

The general news here is, that all Europe is arming and preparing for war, as if it were soon expected. Many of the powers, however, have their reasons for endeavoring to postpone it, at least a few months longer.

Our enemies will not be able to send against us all the strength they intended: they can procure but few Germans; and their recruiting and impressing at home goes on but heavily. They threaten, however, and give out, that Lord Howe is to bombard Boston this summer, and Burgoyne, with the troops from Canada, to destroy Providence, and lay waste Connecticut; while Howe marches against Philadelphia. They [will] do us undoubtedly as much mischief as they can: but the virtue and bravery of our countrymen will, with the blessing of God, prevent part of what they intend, and nobly bear the rest. This campaign is entered upon with a mixture of rage and despair, as their whole scheme of reducing us depends upon its success; the wisest of the nation being clear, that if this fails, administration will not be able to support another.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MR. THOMAS VINY, TENTERDEN, KENT.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, May 4, 1779.

I received with great pleasure your kind letter, as I learnt by it that my hospitable friend still exists, and that his friendship for me had not abated.

We have had a hard struggle, but the Almighty has favored the just cause, and I join most heartily with you in your prayers that he may perfect his work, and establish freedom in the new world, as an asylum for those of the old who deserve it. I find that many worthy and wealthy families of this continent are determined to remove thither and partake of it, as soon as peace shall make the passage safer; for which peace I also join your prayers most cordially, as I think the war a detestable one, and grieve much at the mischief and misery it occasions to many; my only consolation being that I did all in my power to prevent it.

When all the bustle is over, if my short remainder of life will permit my return thither, what a pleasure will it be to see my old friend and his children settled there! I hope he will find vines and fig-trees there for all of them, under which we may sit and converse, enjoying peace and plenty, a good government, good laws and liberty, without which men lose half their value.

I am, with much esteem, dear friend, yours, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MRS. WRIGHT,\* LONDON.

DEAR MADAM,

Passy, May 4, 1779.

I received your favor of the 14th of March

\* MRS. MSHETABEL WRIGHT was altogether a very extraordinary woman. She was the niece of the celebrated John Waa-

past, and if you should continue in your resolution of returning to America, through France, I shall certainly render you any of the little services in my power: but there are so many difficulties at present in getting passages hence, particularly safe ones for women, that methinks I should advise your stay till more settled times, and till a more frequent intercourse is established.

As to the exercise of your art here, I am in doubt whether it would answer your expectations. Here are two or three who profess it, and make a show of their works on the Boulevards; but it is not the taste for persons of fashion to sit to these artists for their portraits: and both house-rent and living at Paris are very expensive.

I thought that friendship required I should acquaint you with these circumstances; after which you will use your discretion.

I am, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

[*Written in the envelope of the above.*]

P.S. My grandson, whom you may remember

ley, but was born at Philadelphia, in which city her parents settled at an early period. Mrs. Wright was greatly distinguished as a modeller in wax; which art she turned to a remarkable account in the American war, by coming to England and exhibiting her performances. This enabled her to procure much intelligence of importance, which she communicated to Dr. Franklin and others, with whom she corresponded during the whole war. As soon as a general was appointed, or a squadron begun to be fitted out, the old lady found means of access to some family where she could gain information, and thus, without being at all suspected, she contrived to transmit an account of the number of the troops, and the place of their destination to her political friends abroad. She at one time had frequent access to Buckingham-House; and used, it was said, to speak her sentiments very freely to their ma-



when a little saucy boy at school, being my amanuensis in writing the within letter, has been diverting me with his remarks. He conceives that your figures cannot be packed up, without damage from any thing you could fill the boxes with to keep them steady. He supposes, therefore, that you must put them into post-chaises, two and two, which will make a long train upon the road, and be a very expensive conveyance ; but as they will eat nothing at the inns, you may the better afford it. When they come to Dover, he is sure, they are so like life and nature, that the master of the packet will not receive them on board without passes ; which you will do well therefore to take out from the secretary's office before you leave London, where they will cost you *only* the modest price of two guineas and sixpence each, which you will pay without grumbling, because you are sure the money will never be employed against your country. It will require, he says, five or six of the long wicker French stage coaches to carry them as passengers from Calais to Paris, and a ship with good accommodations to convey them to America, where all the world will wonder at your clemency to Lord N—— ; that having it in your power to hang or send him to the lighters, you had generously reprieved him for transportation.

TO GENERAL BECKWITH.

SIR,

Passy, May, 17, 1779.

Having assured you verbally that I had no authority to treat or agree with any military person, of any

jesties, who were amused with her originality. The great Lord Chatham honored her with his visits, and she took his likeness, which appears in Westminster Abbey. Mrs. Wright died very old in February, 1786.

rank whatever, to go to America, I understand your expressions, that "*you will take your chance, if I think you may be useful,*" to mean that you will go over without making any terms with me, on a supposition, which you also mention, that my recommendation will be regarded by the congress, and that you shall thereupon be employed in our armies.

Whoever has seen the high character given of you by Prince Ferdinand (under whom you served) to Lord Chatham, which I saw when in London, must think that so able an officer might have been exceedingly useful to our cause, if he had been in America at the beginning of the war. But there is a great difficulty at this time in introducing one of your rank into our armies, now that they are all arranged and fully officered; and this kind of difficulty has been found so great, and the congress has been so embarrassed with numbers of officers from other countries, who arrived under strong recommendations, that they have been at above 100,000 livres expense to pay the charges of such officers in coming to America, and returning to Europe, rather than hazard the discontent, the placing them to the prejudice of our own officers who had served from the beginning, would have occasioned. Under these circumstances, they have not merely left me without authority, but they have in express terms forbid me to agree with, or encourage by any means, the going over of officers to America in expectation of employment. As to my recommendation, whatever weight it might have had formerly, it has in several instances been so improperly employed through the too great confidence I had in recommendations from others, that I think it would at present be of no im-

portance if it were necessary; but after that above mentioned of so great a general, and so good a judge of military merit as Prince Ferdinand, a character of you from me would be impertinence.

Upon the whole, I can only say, that if you choose to go over and settle in our land of liberty, I shall be glad to find you there on my return as a fellow-citizen, because I believe you will be a very good one, and respected there as such by the people. But I cannot advise or countenance your going thither with the expectation you mention.

With great esteem,

I have the honor to be, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO SIR EDWARD NEWENHAM, BART., DUBLIN.

SIR,

Passy, May 27, 1779.

I received some time since a letter from a person at Belfast, informing me that a great number of people in those parts were desirous of going to settle in America, if passports could be obtained for them and their effects, and referring me to you for future information. I shall always be ready to afford every assistance and security in my power to such undertakings, when they are really meant, and are not merely schemes of trade with views of introducing English manufactures into America, under pretence of their being the substance of persons going there to settle.

I admire the spirit with which I see the Irish are at length determined to claim some share of that freedom of commerce, which is the right of all mankind, but which they have been so long deprived of by the abominable selfishness of their fellow-sub

jects. To enjoy all the advantages of the climate, soil, and situation in which God and nature have placed us, is as clear a right as that of breathing, and can never be justly taken from men but as a punishment for some atrocious crime.

The English have long seemed to think it a right which none could have but themselves. Their injustice has already cost them dear, and if persisted in, will be their ruin.

I have the honor to be, with great esteem, Sir,  
your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO GENERAL GATES.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, June 2, 1779.

I received your obliging letter by the Chevalier de Ramondis, who appears extremely sensible of the civilities he received at Boston, and very desirous of being serviceable to the American cause. His wound is not yet right, as he tells me there is a part of the bone still to be cut off : but he is otherwise well and cheerful, and has a great respect for you.

The pride of England was never so humbled by any thing as by your capitulation of Saratoga :\* they have not yet got over it, though a little elevated this spring by their success against the French commerce. But the growing apprehension of having Spain too upon their hands has lately brought them down to an humble seriousness that begins to appear even in ministerial discourses, and the papers of ministerial writers. All the happy effects of that transaction for America are not generally known : I may some

\* Oct. 17, 1777.

time or other acquaint the world with some of them. When shall we meet again in cheerful converse, talk over our adventures, and finish with a quiet game of chess?

The little dissensions between particular states in America are much magnified in England, and they once had great hopes from them. I consider them with you as the effects of apparent security, which do not affect the grand points of independence, and adherence to treaties, and which will vanish at a renewed appearance of danger. This court continues heartily our friend, and the whole nation are warm in our favor; excepting only a few West Indians, and merchants in that trade, whose losses make them a little uneasy.

With sincere and great esteem and affection,  
I am ever, dear Sir, your most obedient,  
and most humble servant,  
B. FRANKLIN.

TO R. BACHE, ESQ. (DR. FRANKLIN'S SON-IN-LAW).  
Passy, June 2, 1779.

I am very easy about the efforts Messrs. L. and \* \* \* are using (as you tell me) to injure me on that side of the water. I trust in the justice of the congress that they will listen to no accusations against me, that I have not first been acquainted with, and had an opportunity of answering. I know those gentlemen have plenty of ill-will to me, though I have never done to either of them the smallest injury, or given the least just cause of offence. But my too great reputation and the general good-will this people have for me, the respect they show me, and even the compliments they make me, all grieve

those unhappy gentlemen ; unhappy indeed in their tempers, and in the dark uncomfortable passions of jealousy, anger, suspicion, envy, and malice. It is enough for good minds to be affected at other people's misfortunes ; but they that are vexed at every body's good luck can never be happy. I take no other revenge of such enemies, than to let them remain in the miserable situation in which their malignant natures have placed them, by endeavoring to support an estimable character ; and thus by continuing the reputation the world has hitherto indulged me with, I shall continue them in their present state of damnation ; and I am not disposed to reverse my conduct for the alleviation of their torments.

I am surprised to hear that my grandson, Temple Franklin, being with me, should be an objection against me, and that there is a cabal for removing him. Methinks it is rather some merit that I have rescued a valuable young man from the danger of being a tory, and fixed him in honest republican whig principles ; as I think from the integrity of his disposition, his industry, his early sagacity, and uncommon abilities for business, he may in time become of great service to his country. It is enough that I have lost my *son* :\* would they add my *grandson* ? An old man of seventy, I undertook a winter voyage at the command of the congress, and for the public service, with no other attendant to take care of me. I am continued here in a foreign country, <sup>u</sup>where, if I am sick, his filial attention comforts me, and, if I die, I have a child to close my eyes and

\* Governor Franklin.

take care of my remains. His dutiful behavior towards me, and his diligence and fidelity in business, are both pleasing and useful to me. His conduct as my private secretary has been unexceptionable, and I am confident the congress will never think of separating us.

I have had a great deal of pleasure in Ben\* too. 'Tis a good honest lad, and will make, I think, a valuable man. He has made as much proficiency in his learning as the boarding-school he was at could well afford him, and after some consideration where to find a better for him, I at length fixed on sending him to Geneva. I had a good opportunity by a gentleman of that city who had a place for him in his chaise, and has a son of about the same age at the same school. He promised to take care of him, and enclosed I send you the letters I have since received relating to him and from him. He went very cheerfully, and I understand is very happy. I miss his company on Sundays at dinner. But if I live, and I can find a little leisure, I shall make the journey next spring to see him, and to see at the same time *the old thirteen United States* of Switzerland.

Thanks be to God, I continue well and hearty. Undoubtedly I grow older, but I think the last ten years have made no great difference. I have some times the gout, but they say that is not so much a disease as a remedy. God bless you. I am your affectionate father,

B. FRANKLIN.

\* Mr. Bache's eldest son.

TO MRS. BACHE (DR. FRANKLIN'S DAUGHTER).

DEAR SALLY,

Passy, June 3, 1779.

If you knew how happy your letters make me, and considered how many miscarry, I think you would write oftener.

I am much obliged to the Miss Cliftons for the kind care they took of my house and furniture.\* Present my thankful acknowledgments to them, and tell them I wish them all sorts of happiness.

The clay medallion of me you say you gave to Mr. Hopkinson was the first of the kind made in France. A variety of others have been made since of different sizes; some to be set in lids of snuff-boxes, and some so small as to be worn in rings; and the numbers sold are incredible. These, with the pictures, busts, and prints, (of which copies upon copies are spread every where,) have made your father's face as well known as that of the moon; so that he durst not do any thing that would oblige him to run away, as his phiz would discover him wherever he should venture to show it. It is said by learned etymologists that the name *doll*, for the images children play with, is derived from the word IDOL: from the number of *dolls* now made of him, he may be truly said, *in that sense*, to be *i-doll-ized* in this country.

I think you did right to stay out of town till the summer was over for the sake of your child's health. I hope you will get out again this summer during the hot months; for I begin to love the dear little creature from your description of her.

I was charmed with the account you give me of your industry, the table-cloths of your own spinning, &c.; but the latter part of the paragraph, that you

\* During the occupation of Philadelphia by a British army.



had sent for linen from France because weaving and flax were grown dear, alas! that dissolved the charm; and your sending for long black pins, and lace, and *feathers*! disgusted me as much as if you had put salt into my strawberries. The spinning, I see, is laid aside, and you are to be dressed for the ball! You seem not to know, my dear daughter, that of all the dear things in this world, idleness is the dearest, except mischief.

The project you mention of removing *Temple* from me was an unkind one: to deprive an old man sent to serve his country in a foreign one of the comfort of a child to attend him, to assist him in health and take care of him in sickness, would be cruel, if it was practicable. In this case it could not be done; for as the pretended suspicions of him are groundless, and his behavior in every respect unexceptionable, I should not part with the child, but with the employment. But I am confident that whatever may be proposed by weak or malicious people, the congress is too wise and too good to think of treating me in that manner.

*Ben*, if I should live long enough to want it, is like to be another comfort to me: as I intend him for a presbyterian as well as a republican, I have sent him to finish his education at Geneva. He is much grown, in very good health, draws a little, as you will see by the enclosed, learns Latin, writing, arithmetic, and dancing, and speaks French better than English. He made a translation of your last letter to him, so that some of your works may now appear in a foreign language. He has not been long from me. I send the accounts I have of him, and I shall put him in mind of writing to you. I cannot propose to you to part with your own dear *Will*. I must one

of these days go back to see him ; happy to be once more all together ! but futurities are uncertain. Teach him however in the mean time to direct his worship more properly, for the deity of "*Hercules*" is now quite out of fashion.

The present you mention as sent by me was rather that of a merchant at Bourdeaux, for he would never give me any account of it ; and neither Temple nor I know any thing of the particulars.

When I began to read your account of the high prices of goods—"a pair of gloves seven dollars, a yard of common gauze twenty-four dollars, and that it now required a fortune to maintain a family in a very plain way," I expected you would conclude with telling me, that every body as well as yourself was grown frugal and industrious ; and I could scarce believe my eyes in reading forward, that "*there never was so much dressing and pleasure going on ;*" and that you yourself wanted "*black pins and feathers from France ;*" to appear, I suppose, in the mode ! This leads me to imagine, that perhaps it is not so much that the goods are grown dear, as that the money is grown cheap, as every thing else will do when excessively plenty ; and that people are still as easy nearly in their circumstances as when a pair of gloves might be had for half a crown. The war indeed may in some degree raise the prices of goods, and the high taxes which are necessary to support the war may make our frugality necessary ; and as I am always preaching that doctrine, I cannot in conscience or in decency encourage the contrary, by my example, in furnishing my children with foolish modes and luxuries. I therefore send all the articles you desire that are useful and necessary, and omit the rest ; for as you say you should "*have great price*

*in wearing any thing I send, and showing it as your father's taste,"* I must avoid giving you an opportunity of doing that with either lace or feathers. If you wear your cambric ruffles as I do, and take care not to mend the holes, they will come in time to be lace; and feathers, my dear girl, may be had in America from every cock's tail.

If you happen again to see General Washington, assure him of my very great and sincere respect, and tell him that all the old generals here amuse themselves in studying the accounts of his operations, and approve highly of his conduct.

Present my affectionate regards to all friends that inquire after me, particularly Mr. Duffield and family, and write oftener, my dear child, to your loving father,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MR. BRIDGEN, LONDON.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, October, 2, 1779.

I received your favor of the 17th past, and the two samples of copper are since come to hand. The metal seems to be very good, and the price reasonable, but I have not yet received the orders necessary to justify my making the purchase proposed. There has indeed been an intention to strike copper coin that may not only be useful as small change, but serve other purposes. Instead of repeating continually upon every halfpenny the dull story that every body knows (and what it would have been no loss to mankind if nobody had ever known), that George III. is king of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, &c. &c. to put on one side some important proverb of Solomon, some pious moral, prudential or economical precept, the frequent inculcation of which, by seeing it every time one receives a piece of money, might

make an impression upon the mind, especially of young persons, and tend to regulate the conduct; such as on some, *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom*: on others, *Honesty is the best policy*: on others, *He that by the plough would thrive, himself must either hold or drive*: on others, *Keep thy shop, and thy shop will keep thee*: on others, *A penny saved is a penny got*: on others, *He that buys what he has no need of, will soon be forced to sell his necessities*: on others, *Early to bed, and early to rise, will make a man healthy, wealthy, and wise*: and so on to a great variety. The other side it was proposed to fill with good designs, drawn and engraved by the best artists in France, of all the different species of barbarity with which the English have carried on the war in America, expressing every abominable circumstance of their cruelty and inhumanity, that figures can express, to make an impression on the minds of posterity as strong and durable as that on the copper. This resolution has been a long time forborne; but the late burning of defenceless towns in Connecticut, on the flimsy pretence that the people fired from behind their houses, when it is known to have been premeditated and ordered from England, will probably give the finishing provocation, and may occasion a vast demand for your metal.

I thank you for your kind wishes respecting my health. I return them most cordially fourfold into your own bosom. Adieu. B. FRANKLIN.

TO B. VAUGHAN, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, Nov. 9, 1779.

I thank you much for the great care and pains you have taken in regulating and correcting the edition of those papers. Your friendship for me ap-

pears in almost every page; and if the preservation of any of them should prove of use to the public, it is to you that the public will owe the obligation. In looking them over, I have noted some faults of impression that hurt the sense, and some other little matters, which you will find all in a sheet under the title of *Errata*. You can best judge whether it may be worth while to add any of them to the errata already printed, or whether it may not be as well to reserve the whole for correction in another edition, if such should ever be. Enclosed I send a more perfect copy of the chapter.\*

If I should ever recover the pieces that were in the hands of my son, and those I left among my papers in America, I think there may be enough to make three more such volumes, of which a great part would be more interesting.

As to the *time* of publishing, of which you ask my opinion, I am not furnished with any reasons, or ideas of reasons, on which to form any opinion. Naturally I should suppose the bookseller to be from experience the best judge, and I should be for leaving it to him.

I did not write the pamphlet you mention. I know nothing of it. I suppose it is the same concerning which Dr. Priestley formerly asked me the same question. That for which he took it, was intitled, *A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain*, with these lines in the title-page:

—“ Whatever is, is right. But purblind man  
Sees but a part o’ the chain, the nearest link :

\* A parable against persecution.—See WRITINGS, Part III. MISCELLANIES, Sec. 1.

His eye not carrying to that equal beam  
That poises all above—————" DRYDEN.

London : printed MDCCXXV.\*

I send you also Mr. Dupont's *Table Économique*, which I think an excellent thing, as it contains in a clear method all the principles of that new sect, called here *les Économists*.

Remember me affectionately to all my good family, and believe me, with great esteem, my dear friend,  
yours, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

TO FRANCIS HOPKINSON, ESQ.

DEAR FRIEND,

Passy, June 4, 1779.

I received your kind letter of the 22d October last, which gave me great pleasure, as it informed me of your welfare, and of your appointment to the honorable office of treasurer of loans. I think the congress judged rightly in their choice. An exactness in accounts, and scrupulous fidelity in matters of trust, are qualities for which your father was eminent, and which I was persuaded were inherited by his son when I took the liberty of naming him one of the executors of my will, a liberty which I hope you will excuse.

I am sorry for the losses you have suffered by the *Goths* and *Vandals*, but hope it will be made up to you by the good Providence of God, and the goodwill of your country, to whom your pen has occasionally been of service. I am glad the enemy have left something of my gimcrackery that is capable of affording you pleasure. You are therefore very welcome to the use of my electrical and pneumatic

\* See a full account of this pamphlet in MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE, Part 1. p. 33, 4to. ed. ; p. 63, 8vo. ed.

machines as long as you think proper. I enclose you a little piece of Oxford wit, which I lately received, hoping it may afford you amusement. Present my respects to your good mother and sisters, and believe me ever,

my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

P.S. Permit me to recommend the new minister, Monsieur le Chevalier de la Luzerne, to your civilities, as a gentleman of most amiable character here, and a hearty friend of the American cause. If you can in any respect be serviceable to him you will much oblige me.

Enclosed in the foregoing (supposed to have been written by the late SIR WILLIAM JONES).

Collect read at Oxford on one of the fast days.

O King ! from whom all tawdry ribbons, all silk gowns, and all lawn sleeves do proceed ; give unto thy subjects that peace which the sword cannot give ; and since thou hast unjustly brought us to the beginning of this war, put an end to the same by thy mighty prerogative ; granting us in this war, at least the shadow of justice, and in wars to come a little more of the substance : through the merits of thy trusty and well beloved Sir Frederic North, our chancellor.

#### TO PÈRE BECCARIA.\*

DEAR SIR,

Passy, November 19, 1779.

Having some time since heard of your illness, with great concern, it gave me infinite pleasure to

\* GIOVANNI BATTISTE BECCARIA, a religious of the School of Piety, was a native of Mondovi. His celebrity as a teacher of mathematics and philosophy, first at Palermo, and afterwards at Rome, caused him to be invited to Turin, where he filled the chair of experimental lecturer, and was employed in the tuition of some branches of the royal family. His correspondence was sought by men of letters in various countries ; and he imparted to Dr. Frank-

learn this day from M. Chantel (who did me the honor of a visit) that you were so far recovered as to be able to make little excursions on horseback. I pray God that your convalescence may be quick and perfect, and your health be again firmly established: *science* would lose too much in losing one so zealous and active in its cause, and so capable of accelerating its progress and augmenting its dominions.

I find myself here immersed in affairs which absorb my attention, and prevent my pursuing those studies in which I always found the highest satisfaction: and I am now grown so old as hardly to hope for a return of that leisure and tranquillity so necessary for philosophical disquisitions. I have, however, not long since thrown a few thoughts on paper relative to the aurora borealis,\* which I would send you, but that I suppose you may have seen them in the Journal of l'Abbé Rozier. If not, I will make out a copy and send it to you; perhaps with some corrections.

Every thing of your writing is always very welcome to me: if, therefore, you have lately published any new experiments or observations in physics, I shall be happy to see them, when you have an opportunity of sending them to me. With the highest esteem, respect, and affection, I am, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

lin in particular, many important facts on philosophical subjects. Father Beccaria died at Turin, in an advanced age, in 1781. His "Dissertations on Electricity" have been published; but the most curious of his pieces is an "Essay on the Cause of Storms and Tempests."

\* See WRITINGS, Part IV. "*Philosophical Subjects.*"



TO DR. PRICE, LONDON.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, February 6, 1780.

Your writings, after all the abuse you and they have met with, begin to make serious impressions on those who at first rejected the counsels you gave; and they will acquire new weight every day, and be in high esteem when the cavils against them are dead and forgotten. Please to present my affectionate respects to that honest, sensible, and intelligent society,\* who did me so long the honor of admitting me to share in their instructive conversations. I never think of the hours I so happily spent in that company without regretting that they are never to be repeated; for I see no prospect of an end to this unhappy war in my time. Dr. Priestley, you tell me, continues his experiments with success. We make daily great improvements in *natural*—there is one I wish to see in *moral* philosophy; the discovery of a plan that would induce and oblige nations to settle their disputes without first cutting one another's throats. When will human reason be sufficiently improved to see the advantage of this? When will men be convinced that even successful wars at length become misfortunes to those who unjustly commenced them, and who triumphed blindly in their success, not seeing all its consequences? Your great comfort and mine in this war is, that we honestly and faithfully did every thing in our power to prevent it. Adieu, and believe me ever, my dear friend, yours, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

\* Supposed to allude to a club at the London Coffee-house.

TO DR. PRIESTLEY.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, February 8, 1780.

I always rejoice to hear of your being still employed in experimental researches into nature, and of the success you meet with. The rapid progress *true* science now makes, occasions my regretting sometimes that I was born so soon: it is impossible to imagine the height to which may be carried in a thousand years the power of man over matter; we may perhaps learn to deprive large masses of their gravity, and give them absolute levity, for the sake of easy transport. Agriculture may diminish its labor and double its produce: all diseases may by sure means be prevented or cured (not excepting even that of old age), and our lives lengthened at pleasure, even beyond the antediluvian standard. O that moral science were in as fair a way of improvement, that men would cease to be wolves to one another, and that human beings would at length learn what they now improperly call humanity!

I am glad my little paper on the aurora borealis pleased. If it should occasion farther inquiry, and so produce a better hypothesis, it will not be wholly useless.

I am ever, with the greatest and most sincere esteem, dear sir, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

*[Enclosed in the foregoing Letter; being an answer to a separate paper received from Dr. Priestley.]*

I have considered the situation of that person very attentively: I think that with a little help from the *moral algebra*,\* he might form a better judgment than any other person can form for him.

\* See Letter to Dr. Priestley, Sept. 10, 1772, Part 1.

But since my opinion seems to be desired, I give it for continuing to the end of the term, under all the present disagreeable circumstances: the connexion will then die a natural death. No reason will be expected to be given for the separation, and of course no offence taken at reasons given, the friendship may still subsist, and in some other way be useful. The time diminishes daily, and is usefully employed. All human situations have their inconveniences: we *feel* those that we find in the present, and we neither *feel* nor *see* those that exist in another. Hence we make frequent and troublesome changes without amendment, and often for the worse. In my youth I was passenger in a little sloop, descending the river Delaware. There being no wind, we were obliged when the ebb was spent, to cast anchor, and wait for the next. The heat of the sun on the vessel was excessive, the company strangers to me, and not very agreeable. Near the river side I saw what I took to be a pleasant green meadow, in the middle of which was a large shady tree, where it struck my fancy I could sit and read (having a book in my pocket) and pass the time agreeably till the tide turned; I therefore prevailed with the captain to put me ashore. Being landed, I found the greatest part of my meadow was really a marsh, in crossing which, to come at my tree, I was up to my knees in mire: and I had not placed myself under its shade five minutes before the muskitoes in swarms found me out, attacked my legs, hands, and face, and made my reading and my rest impossible; so that I returned to the beach, and called for the boat to come and take me on board again, where I was obliged to bear the heat I had strove to quit, and also the

laugh of the company. Similar cases in the affairs of life have since frequently fallen under my observation.

I have had thoughts of a college for him in America : I know no one who might be more useful to the public in the institution of youth. But there are possible unpleasantnesses in that situation : it cannot be obtained but by a too hazardous voyage at this time for a family ; and the time for experiments would be all otherwise engaged.\*

TO GENERAL WASHINGTON.

SIR,

Passy, March 5, 1780.

I have received but lately the letter your excellency did me the honor of writing to me in recommendation of the Marquis de la Fayette. His modesty detained it long in his own hands. We became acquainted, however, from the time of his arrival at Paris ; and his zeal for the honor of our country, his activity in our affairs here, and his firm attachment to our cause, and to you, impressed me with the same regard and esteem for him that your excellency's letter would have done had it been immediately delivered to me.

Should peace arrive after another campaign or two, and afford us a little leisure, I should be happy to see your excellency in Europe, and to accompany you, if my age and strength would permit, in visiting

\* The advice contained in this paper related to Dr. Priestley himself, who had engaged to live with Lord Shelburne, as his librarian, at a salary of about £300 per annum, for a certain number of years : but before the term had expired he became disgusted with his situation, and requested counsel from Dr. Franklin on the subject.

some of its ancient and most famous kingdoms. You would on this side the sea enjoy the great reputation you have acquired, pure and free from those little shades that the jealousy and envy of a man's countrymen and cotemporaries are ever endeavouring to cast over living merit. Here you would know, and enjoy, what posterity will say of Washington. For a thousand leagues have nearly the same effect as a thousand years. The feeble voice of those grovelling passions cannot extend so far either in time or distance. At present I enjoy that pleasure for you : as I frequently hear the old generals of this martial country (who study the maps of America, and mark upon them all your operations) speak with sincere approbation and great applause of your conduct ; and join in giving you the character of one of the greatest captains of the age.

I must soon quit the scene, but you may live to see our country flourish, as it will amazingly and rapidly after the war is over ; like a field of young Indian corn, which long fair weather and sunshine had enfeebled and discolored, and which in that weak state, by a thunder gust of violent wind, hail, and rain, seemed to be threatened with absolute destruction ; yet the storm being past, it recovers fresh verdure, shoots up with double vigor, and delights the eye not of its owner only, but of every observing traveller.

The best wishes that can be formed for your health, honor, and happiness, ever attend you, from

Yours, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MR. LE CHEVALIER DE LA LUZERNE,  
*Minister from France to the United States.*

SIR,

Passy, March 5, 1780.

I received with great pleasure the letter you did me the honor of writing to me from Boston. I rejoiced to hear of your safe arrival, and that the reception you met with in my country had been agreeable to you. I hope its air will suit you, and that while you reside in it you will enjoy constant health and happiness.

Your good brother does me sometimes the honor of calling on me, and we converse in English, which he speaks very intelligibly. I suppose that by this time you do the same. Mr. de Malesherbes did me lately the same honor. That great man seems to have no wish of returning into public employment, but amuses himself with planting, and is desirous of obtaining all those trees of North America that have not yet been introduced into France. Your sending him a box of the seeds would, I am persuaded, much oblige him. They may be obtained of my young friend Bartram, living near Philadelphia.

You will have heard that Spain has lately met with a little misfortune at sea; but the bravery with which her ships fought a vastly superior force, has gained her great honor. We are anxious here for farther news from that coast, which is daily expected. Great preparations are making here for the ensuing campaign, and we flatter ourselves that it will be more active and successful in Europe than the last.

One of the advantages of great states is, that the calamity occasioned by a foreign war falls only on a very small part of the community, who happen from their situation and particular circumstances to be

exposed to it. Thus, as it is always fair weather in our parlors, it is at Paris always peace. The people pursue their respective occupations ; the playhouses, the opera, and other public diversions, are as regularly and fully attended as in times of profoundest tranquillity, and the same small concerns divide us into parties. Within these few weeks we are for or against Jeannot, a new actor. This man's performance, and the marriage of the Duke de Richelieu, fills up much more of our present conversation than any thing that relates to the war. A demonstration this of the public felicity !

My grandson joins with me in best wishes for your health and prosperity. He is much flattered by your kind remembrance of him. We desire also that M. de Marbois\* would accept our assurance of esteem.

I have the honor to be with the greatest respect,  
Sir, yours, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

F. HOPKINSON, ESQ. PHILADELPHIA.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, March 16, 1780.

I thank you for your political *Squibs*: they are well made. I am glad to find you have such plenty of good powder.

You propose that *Kill-pig*, the butcher, should operate upon himself. You will find some thoughts on that subject in a little piece called "*A merry Song about Murder*," in a London newspaper I send herewith.

The greatest discovery made in Europe for some time past is that of Dr. Ingenhausz's relating to the great use of the leaves of trees in producing whole-

\* Secretary of the French Legation in the United States.

some air; I would send you his book if I had it. A new instrument is lately invented here,\* a kind of telescope, which by means of Iceland crystal occasions the double appearance of an object, and the two appearances being farther distant from each other in proportion to the distance of the object from the eye, by moving an index on a graduated line till the two appearances coincide, you find on the line the real distance of the object. I am not enough master of this instrument to describe it accurately, having seen it but once; but it is very ingeniously contrived.

Remember me respectfully to your mother and sisters, and believe me ever, my dear friend,

Yours most affectionately, B. FRANKLIN.

TO DR. BOND, PHILADELPHIA.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, March 16, 1780.

I thank you for the pleasing account you give me of the health and welfare of my old friends, Hugh Roberts, Luke Morris, Philip Syng, Samuel Rhoades, &c. with the same of yourself and family. Shake the old ones by the hand for me, and give the young ones my blessing. For my own part, I do not find that I grow any older. Being arrived at 70, and considering that by travelling further in the same road I should probably be led to the grave, I stopped short, turned about, and walked back again; which having done these four years, you may now call me 66. Advise those old friends of ours to follow my example; keep up your spirits, and that will keep up your bodies: you will no more stoop under

\* *By the Abbé Rochon, of the French Academy of Sciences.*



the weight of age than if you had swallowed a hand-spike. But it is right to abate a little in the article of labor; and therefore as your demonstrations of midwifery "are useful, and it is a pity you should give them up, for *want of subjects* in the lying-in wards," I advise you to get some of your young pupils to help you.

I am glad the Philosophical Society made that compliment to Mr. Gerard.\* I wish they would do the same to Mr. Feutry, a worthy gentleman here; and to Dr. Ingenhausz, who has made some great discoveries lately respecting the leaves of trees in improving air for the use of animals: he will send you his book. He is physician to the empress queen. I have not yet seen your piece on inoculation.

Remember me respectfully and affectionately to Mrs. Bond, your children, and all friends. I am ever,

Yours, B. FRANKLIN.

P.S. I have bought some valuable books, which I intend to present to the society; but shall not send them till safer times.

TO DR. COOPER, BOSTON.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, March 16, 1780.

I received yours of Nov. 12, by your grandson, who appears a very promising lad, in whom I think you will have much satisfaction. He is in a boarding-school just by me, and was well last Sunday, when I had the pleasure of his company to dinner with Mr. Adam's sons and some other young Americans. He will soon acquire the language; and if God spares his life, may make a very serviceable man to his country.

\* Formerly Minister from France to the United States.

It gives me infinite satisfaction to find that with you the wisest and best among our people are so hearty in endeavouring to strengthen the alliance. We certainly owe much to this nation ; and we shall obtain much more, if the same prudent conduct towards them continues, for they really and strongly wish our prosperity, and will promote it by every means in their power. But we should at the same time do as much as possible for ourselves, and not ride (as we say) a free horse to death. There are some Americans returning hence, with whom our people should be upon their guard ; as carrying with them a spirit of enmity to this country. Not being liked here themselves, they dislike the people ; for the same reason, indeed, they ought to dislike all that know them.

With the sincerest respect and esteem, I am ever,  
my dear friend,

Yours most affectionately, B. FRANKLIN.

TO C. GRIFFIN, ESQ.

SIR,

Passy, March 16, 1780.

I will take the first opportunity of mentioning to Mr. Gerard what you hint, relative to our not entertaining strangers so frequently and liberally as is the custom in France. But he has travelled in Europe, and knows that modes of nations differ. The French are convivial, live much at one another's tables, and are glad to feast travellers. In Italy and Spain a stranger, however recommended, rarely dines at the house of any gentleman, but lives at his inn. The Americans hold a medium.

I have the honor to be, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

TO W. CARMICHAEL, ESQ. \* MADRID.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, June 17, 1780.

Sir J. Dalrymple has been here some time, but I hear nothing of his political operations. The learned talk of the discovery he has made in the Escorial library, of forty epistles of Brutus, a missing part of Tacitus, and a piece of Seneca, that have never yet been printed, which excite much curiosity.† He has not been with me, and I am told by one of his friends, that though he wished to see me, he did not think it prudent. So I suppose I shall have no communication with him, for I shall not seek it. As Count de Vergennes has mentioned nothing to me of any memorial from him, I suppose he has not presented it,—perhaps discouraged by the reception it met with in Spain.—So I wish, for curiosity's sake, you would send me a copy of it. ‡

The Marquis de La Fayette arrived safely at Boston the 28th of April, and it is said gave expectations of the coming of a squadron and troops. The vessel that brings this left New London the second of May: her captain reports that the siege of Charlestown was raised, the troops attacked in their retreat, and Clinton killed; but this wants confirmation.

London has been in the utmost confusion for seven or eight days. The beginning of this month, a mob of fanatics, joined by a mob of rogues, burnt and de-

\* Secretary of the American Legation.

† Mr. Carmichael, in answer to this part of Dr. Franklin's letter, says,—“I have been assured by Count Campomanes, the Abbé Gavara and his brother (both academicians), that no such manuscripts exist in the library of the Escorial as those mentioned by Sir John Dalrymple.

‡ See Sir J. D.'s *Anecdote Historique*, at the end of the Correspondence.

stroyed property to the amount, it is said, of a million sterling. Chapels of foreign ambassadors, houses of members of parliament, that had promoted the act for favoring Catholics, and the houses of many private persons of that religion, were pillaged and consumed, or pulled down, to the number of fifty; among the rest, Lord Mansfield's is burnt with all his furniture, pictures, books, and papers. Thus he who approved the burning American houses has had fire brought home to him. He himself was horribly scared, and Governor Hutchinson, it is said, died outright of the fright. The mob, tired with roaring and rioting seven days and nights, were at length suppressed, and quiet restored on the ninth in the evening. Next day Lord George Gordon was committed to the Tower.

Enclosed I send you the little piece you desire.\* To understand it rightly, you should be acquainted with some few circumstances. The person to whom it was addressed is Madame Brillon, a lady of most respectable character and pleasing conversation, mistress of an amiable family in this neighborhood, with which I spend an evening twice in every week. She has among other elegant accomplishments, that of an excellent musician; and with her daughters, who sing prettily, and some friends who play, she kindly entertains me and my grandson with little concerts, a cup of tea, and a game of chess. I call this *my Opera*; for I rarely go to the Opera at Paris.—*The Moulin Joli* is a little island in the Seine, about two leagues hence, part of the country-seat of another friend,† where we visit every summer, and spend a

\* The Ephemera. See WRITINGS, Part III. Sect. 3.

† Monsieur Watelet.

day in the pleasing society of the ingenious, learned, and very polite persons who inhabit it. At the time when the letter was written all conversations at Paris were filled with disputes about the music of *Gluck* and *Picini*, a German and Italian musician, who divided the town into violent parties. A friend of this lady having obtained a copy of it under promise not to give another, did not observe that promise, so that many have been taken, and it is become as public as such a thing can well be, that is not printed; but I could not dream of its being heard of at Madrid! The thought was partly taken from a little piece from some unknown writer which I met with fifty years since in a newspaper, and which the sight of the *Ephemera* brought to my recollection. Adieu, my dear friend, and believe me ever,

Yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO DR. FOTHERGILL.

Passy, June 19, 1780.

My dear old friend, Dr. Fothergill, may assure Lady H. of my respects, and of any service in my power to render her, or her affairs in America. I believe matters in Georgia cannot much longer continue in their present situation, but will return to that state in which they were when her property, and that of our common friend G. W. received the protection she acknowledges.

I rejoiced most sincerely to hear of your recovery from the dangerous illness by which I lost my very valuable friend P. Collinson. As I am sometimes apprehensive of the same disorder, I wish to know the means that were used and succeeded in your

case; and shall be exceedingly obliged to you for communicating them when you can do it conveniently.

Be pleased to remember me respectfully to your good sister, and to our worthy friend David Barclay, who I make no doubt laments with you and me that the true pains we took together to prevent all this horrible mischief proved ineffectual.

I am ever,

Yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MR. SMALL,\* PARIS.

Passy, July 22, 1780.

You see, my dear sir, that I was not afraid my masters would take it amiss if I ran to see an old friend though in the service of their enemy. They are reasonable enough to allow, that differing politics should not prevent the intercommunication of philosophers who study and converse for the benefit of mankind. But you have doubts about coming to dine with me. I suppose you will not venture it: your refusal will not indeed do so much honor to your generosity and good nature of your government, as to your sagacity. You know your people, and I do not expect you. I think too that in friendship I ought not to make you more visits, as I intended:

\* A surgeon of eminence in the British army, then passing through Paris, brother to Colonel Small, who particularly distinguished himself by his humanity at the battle of Bunker's Hill, near Boston; a trait of whom is admirably delineated by the able pencil of Colonel Turnbull (an American amateur artist) in his picture of that battle; from which an elegant engraving was made and published in London.

but I send my grandson to pay his duty to his physician.

You inquired about my gout, and I forgot to acquaint you that I had treated it a little cavalierly in its two last accesses. Finding one night that my foot gave me more pain after it was covered warm in bed, I put it out of bed naked; and perceiving it easier, I let it remain longer than I at first designed, and at length fell asleep, leaving it there till morning. The pain did not return, and I grew well. Next winter having a second attack, I repeated the experiment; not with such immediate success in dismissing the gout, but constantly with the effect of rendering it less painful, so that it permitted me to sleep every night. I should mention, that it was my son\* who gave me the first intimation of this practice; he being in the old opinion that the gout was to be drawn out by transpiration; and having heard me say that perspiration was carried on more copiously when the body was naked than when clothed, he put his foot out of bed to increase that discharge, and found ease by it, which he thought a confirmation of the doctrine. But this method requires to be confirmed by more experiments, before one can conscientiously recommend it. I give it you, however, in exchange for your receipt of tartar emetic, because the commerce of philosophy as well as other commerce, is best promoted by taking care to make returns. I am ever, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

\* Governor Franklin.

TO MISS GEORGIANA SHIPLEY.\*

Passy, October 8, 1780.

It is long, very long, my dear friend, since I had the pleasure of hearing from you, and receiving any of your very pleasing letters. But it is my fault. I have long omitted my part of the correspondence. Those who love to receive letters should write letters. I wish I could safely promise an amendment of that fault. But besides the indolence attending age, and growing upon us with it, my time is engrossed by too much business, and I have too many inducements to postpone doing, what I feel I ought to do for my own sake, and what I can never resolve to omit entirely.

Your translations from Horace, as far as I can judge of poetry and translations, are very good. That of the *Quo quo ruitis* is so suitable to the times, that the conclusion (in your version) seems to threaten like a prophecy; and methinks there is at least some appearance of danger that it may be fulfilled.—I am unhappily an enemy, yet I think there has been enough of blood spilt, and I wish what is left in the veins of that once loved people, may be spared, by a peace solid and everlasting.

It is a great while since I heard any thing of the *good bishop*. Strange, that so simple a character should sufficiently distinguish one of that sacred body! *Donnez-moi de ses nouvelles*. I have been some time flattered with the expectation of seeing the countenance of that most honored and ever beloved friend delineated by your pencil. The portrait

\* Daughter of Dr. Shipley, bishop of St. Asaph.



is said to have been long on the way, but is not yet arrived ; nor can I hear where it is.

Indolent as I have confessed myself to be, I could not, you see, miss this good and safe opportunity of sending you a few lines, with my best wishes for your happiness, and that of the whole dear and amiable family, in whose sweet society I have spent so many happy hours. Mr. Jones\* tells me he shall have a pleasure in being the bearer of my letter, of which I make no doubt. I learn from him, that to your drawing, and music, and painting, and poetry, and Latin, you have added a proficiency in chess ; so that you are, as the French say, *remplie de talents*. May they and you fall to the lot of one that shall duly value them, and love you as much as I do !

Adieu,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO DOCTOR PRICE.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, October 9, 1780.

Besides the pleasure of their company, I had the great satisfaction of hearing by your two valuable friends, and learning from your letter, that you enjoy a good state of health. May God continue it, as well for the good of mankind as for your comfort ! I thank you much for the second edition of your excellent pamphlet. I forwarded that you sent to Mr. Dana, he being in Holland. I wish also to see the piece you have written (as Mr. Jones tells me) on toleration. I do not expect that your new parliament will be either wiser or honester than the

\* Afterwards Sir William Jones, who married the bishop of St. Asaph's eldest daughter, Anna Maria Shipley.

last. All projects to procure an honest one, by place bills, &c. appear to me vain and impracticable. The true cure, I imagine, is to be found only in rendering all places unprofitable, and the king too poor to give bribes and pensions. Till this is done, which can only be by a revolution, (and I think you have not virtue enough left to procure one,) your nation will always be plundered, and obliged to pay by taxes the plunderers for plundering and ruining. Liberty and virtue therefore join in the call, COME OUT OF HER, MY PEOPLE!

I am fully of your opinion respecting religious tests; but though the people of Massachusetts have not in their new constitution kept quite clear of them; yet if we consider what the people were one hundred years ago, we must allow they have gone greater lengths in liberality of sentiment on religious subjects: and we may hope for greater degrees of perfection when their constitution some years hence shall be revised. If Christian preachers had continued to teach as Christ and his apostles did, without salaries, and as the Quakers now do, I imagine tests would have never existed; for I think they were invented not so much to secure religion itself, as the emoluments of it. When a religion is good, I conceive that it will support itself; and when it cannot support itself, and God does not take care to support it, so that its professors are obliged to call for the help of the civil power, 'tis a sign, I apprehend, of its being a bad one. But I shall be out of my depth if I wade any deeper in theology, and I will not trouble you with politics, nor with news which are almost as uncertain; but conclude with a heart-felt wish to embrace you once more, and enjoy your sweet so-

ciety in peace, among our honest, worthy, ingenious friends at the *London*.

Adieu, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

TO SIR GREY COOPER, BARONET,  
*Secretary to the treasury of Great Britain.*

SIR, Passy, November 7, 1780.

I understand that Mr. Laurens, an American gentleman, for whom I have a great esteem, is a prisoner in the Tower, and that his health suffers by the closeness and rigor of his confinement. As I do not think that your affairs receive any advantage from the harshness of this proceeding, I take the freedom of requesting your kind interposition, to obtain for him such a degree of air and liberty on his parole or otherwise, as may be necessary for his health and comfort. The fortune of war, which is daily changing, may possibly put it in my power to do the like good office for some friend of yours, which I shall perform with much pleasure, not only for the sake of humanity, but in respect to the ashes of our former friendship.

With great regard, I have the honor to be, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MONS. NOGARET.

SIR, Passy, March 8, 1781.

I received the letter you have done me the honor of writing to me the 2d instant, wherein, after overwhelming me with a flood of compliments, which I can never hope to merit, you request my opinion of your translation of a Latin verse, that has been

applied to me.\* If I were, which I really am not, sufficiently skilled in your excellent language to be a proper judge of its poesy, the supposition of my being the subject must restrain me from giving any opinion on that line, except that it ascribes too much to me, especially in what relates to the tyrant, the revolution having been the work of many able and brave men, wherein it is sufficient honor for me if I am allowed a small share.

I am much obliged by the favorable sentiments you are pleased to entertain of me; and I shall be glad to see your remarks on Gay's Fan, as well as your own poem on the same subject.

With regard, I have the honor to be, Sir,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

Passy, March 12, 1781.

I must now beg leave to say something relating to myself, a subject with which I have not often troubled the congress. I have passed my seventy-fifth year, and I find that the long and severe fit of the gout which I had the last winter has shaken me exceedingly; and I am yet far from having recovered the bodily strength I before enjoyed. I do

- \* Eripuit cælo fulmen, sceptrumque tyrannis.

THUS TRANSLATED BY D'ALEMBERT:

" Tu vois le sage courageux,  
Dont l'heureux et mâle génie  
Arracha le tonnerre aux dieux,  
Et le sceptre à la tyrannie."

ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY JAMES ELPHINSTON:

" He snatch'd the bolt from Heaven's avenging hand,  
Disarm'd and drove the tyrant from the land."

not know that my mental faculties are impaired. Perhaps I shall be the last to discover that; but I am sensible of great diminution in my activity, a quality I think particularly necessary in your minister at this court. I am afraid, therefore, that your affairs may some time or other suffer by my deficiency. I find also that the business is too heavy for me, and too confining. The constant attendance at home, which is necessary for receiving and accepting your bills of exchange (a matter foreign to my *ministerial functions*), to answer letters, and perform other parts of my employment, prevent my taking the air and exercise which my annual journies formerly used to afford me, and which contributed much to the preservation of my health. There are many other little personal attentions which the infirmities of age render necessary to an old man's comfort, even perhaps in some degree to the continuance of his existence, and with which business often interferes. I have been engaged in public affairs, and enjoyed public confidence in some shape or other during the long term of fifty years, an honor sufficient to satisfy any reasonable ambition, and I have now no other left but the repose which I hope the congress will grant me, by sending some person to supply my place. At the same time I beg they may be assured, that it is not any the least doubt of their success in the glorious cause, nor any disgust received in their service, that induces me to decline it, but purely and simply the reasons above mentioned; and as I cannot at present undergo the fatigues of a sea voyage, (the last having been almost too much for me,) and would not again expose myself to the hazard of capture and

imprisonment in this time of war, I purpose to remain here at least till the peace; perhaps it may be for the remainder of my life; and if any knowledge or experience I have acquired here may be thought of use to my successor, I shall freely communicate it, and assist him with any influence I may be supposed to have, or counsel that may be desired of me.

I have one request more to make, which, if I have served the congress to their satisfaction, I hope they will not refuse me. It is this; that they will be pleased to take under their protection my grandson, William Temple Franklin. I have educated him from his infancy, and I brought him over with an intention of placing him where he might be qualified for the profession of the law; but the constant occasion I had for his services as a private secretary, during the time of the commissioners, and more extensively since their departure, has induced me to keep him always with me; and indeed being continually disappointed of the secretary congress had at different times intended me, it would have been impossible for me, without this young gentleman's assistance, to have gone through the business incumbent on me: he has thereby lost so much of the time necessary to law studies, that I think it rather advisable for him to continue, if it may be, in the line of public foreign affairs for which he seems qualified by a sagacity and judgment above his years. Great diligence and exact probity, a genteel address, a facility in speaking well the French tongue, and all the knowledge of business to be obtained by a four years' constant employment in the secretary's office, where he may be said to have served a kind

of apprenticeship. After all the allowance I am capable of making for the partiality of a parent to his offspring, I cannot but think he may in time make a very able foreign minister for the congress, in whose service his fidelity may be relied on ; but I do not at present propose him as such, as a few years more of experience will not be amiss. In the mean time, if they shall think fit to employ him as a secretary to their minister at any European court, I am persuaded they will have reason to be satisfied with his conduct, and I shall be thankful for his appointment as a favor to me.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE.

Passy, March 14, 1781.

You mention my having enemies in America. You are luckier, for I think you have none here, nor any where. Your friends have heard of your being gone against the traitor Arnold, and are anxious to hear of your success, and that you have brought him to justice. Enclosed is a copy of a letter from his agent in England, by which the price of his treason may be nearly guessed at. Judas sold only one man, Arnold three millions ; Judas got for his one man 30 pieces of silver, Arnold not a halfpenny a head. A miserable bargainer!—especially when one considers the quantity of infamy he has acquired to himself, and entailed on his family.

The English are in a fair way of gaining still more enemies ; they play a desperate game. Fortune may favor them as it sometimes does a drunken dicer. But by their tyranny in the east they have at length roused the powers there against them ; and I do not know that they have in the west a single friend. If

they lose their India commerce, which is one of their present great supports, and one battle at sea, their credit is gone and the power follows. Thus empires by pride, and folly, and extravagance, ruin themselves like individuals. M. La Motte Piquet has snatched from between their teeth a good deal of their West India prey, having taken 22 sail of their homeward bound prizes; one of our American privateers has taken two more, and brought them into Brest; and two were burnt. There were 34 in company, with two men-of-war of the line and two frigates, who saved themselves by flight; but we do not hear of their being yet got in. B. FRANKLIN.

TO MR. HODGSON, LONDON.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, April 1, 1781.

I am shocked exceedingly at the account you give me of Digges. He that robs the rich even of a single guinea is a villain, but what is he who can break his sacred trust, by robbing a poor man and a prisoner of eighteen-pence given charitably for his relief, and repeat that crime as often as there are weeks in a winter, and multiply it by robbing as many poor men every week as make up the number of near 600? We have no name in our language for such atrocious wickedness. If such a fellow is not damned, 'tis not worth while to keep a devil.\*

\* EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM DR. FRANKLIN TO J. JAY, ESQ.

Passy, Aug. 20, 1781.

"—— Digges, a Maryland merchant residing in London, who pretended to be a zealous American, and to have much concern for our poor people in the English prisons, drew upon me for their relief at different times last winter to the amount of 495*l.* sterling, which he said had been drawn for upon him by the gentlemen at Portsmouth and Plymouth, who had the care of the dis-



I am sorry you have been obliged to advance money. I desired Mr. Grand some time since to order 200*l.* to be paid you in London. If that is not done, draw on him for the sum of 250*l.* payable at 30 days' sight, and your bill shall be duly honored.

I enclose a copy of Digges's last letter to me, in which he acknowledges the drafts made on me, (omitting one of 75*l.*) and pretends that he only draws as he is drawn upon, by his friends who hand the money to the prisoners, and that those friends are almost tired of the charitable employment, but he encourages them, &c. Be so good as to let them know of this letter. I wish with you and with all good men for peace: proposals of mediation have been made, but the effect is yet uncertain.

With sincere esteem, I am, dear sir, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO W. CARMICHAEL, ESQ.\* MADRID.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, April 12, 1781.

I received your favor by M. Cabarras, and should have been glad if I could have rendered him any service here. He appears an amiable man, and expert in affairs. I thank you much for your friendly hints of the operations of my enemies, and of the means I might use to defeat them. Having in view at present no other point to gain but that of rest, I do not take their malice so much amiss, as it may farther my project, and perhaps be some advantage to you.  
\* \* \* and \* \* \* are open, and so far honorable ene-

tribution. To my utter astonishment, I have since learnt that the villain had not applied above 30*l.* of the money to that use, and that he has failed and absconded."

\* The American chargé d'affaires.

mies; the \* \* \*, if enemies, are more covered. I never did any of them the least injury, and can conceive no other source of their malice but envy. To be sure the excessive respect shown me here by all ranks of people, and the little notice taken of them, was a mortifying circumstance; but it was what I could neither prevent or remedy. Those who feel pain at seeing others enjoy pleasure, and are unhappy, must meet daily with so many causes of torment, that I conceive them to be already in a state of damnation; and on that account, I ought to drop all resentment with regard to those two gentlemen. But I cannot help being concerned at the mischief their ill tempers will be continually doing in our public affairs, whenever they have any concern in them.

I remember the maxim you mention of Charles V., *yo y el Tiempo*; and have somewhere met with an answer to it in this distich,

I and Time 'gainst any two,  
Chance and I 'gainst Time and you;

and I think the gentlemen you have at present to deal with, would do wisely to guard a little more against certain chances.

The price of the *Biblioteca Hispana* is too high for me. I thank you for the gazettes you sent me by the ambassador's courier. I received none by the last. I shall be exceedingly glad to receive the memoirs of the *Sociedad Economica*, and the Works on Political Economy of its founder. The Prince of Maceran, with several other persons of his nation, did me the honor of breakfasting with me on Monday last, when I presented the compliments you charged me with.

Mr. Cumberland has not yet arrived at Paris as far as I have heard.

The discontents in our army have been quieted. There was in them not the least disposition of revolting to the enemy.

I thank you for the Maryland captain's news, which I hope will be confirmed. They have heard something of it in England, as you will see by the papers, and are very uneasy about it, as well as about their news from the East Indies.

Yours affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO M. COURT DE GEBELIN,\* PARIS.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, May 7, 1781.

I am glad the little book † proved acceptable. It does not appear to me intended for a grammar to teach the language: it is rather what we call in English a *spelling-book*, in which the only method observed is, to arrange the words according to their

\* ANTOINE COURT DE GEBELIN, born at Nismes, in 1725, of a Protestant family, became a minister in that communion, first in the Cevennes, and next at Lausanne: which however he quitted, together with the clerical function, for the profession of literature at Paris, where he acquired so great a reputation as an antiquary and philologist, that he was appointed to superintend one of the museums. He lost much of his reputation, however, by his enthusiastic zeal in favor of animal magnetism. He died in Paris, May 13, 1784. His great work is intitled, "*Monde Primitif, analysé et comparé avec le Monde Moderne*," 9 tom. 4to. The excellence of his character may be appreciated from the single fact, that on quitting Switzerland, he voluntarily gave to his sister the principal part of his patrimony, reserving little for himself, and depending for a maintenance upon the exercise of his talents.

† A vocabulary of the language of one of the Indian tribes in North America.

number of syllables, placing those of one syllable together, then those of two syllables, and so on. And it is to be observed, that *Sa ki ma*, for instance, is not three words, but one word of three syllables; and the reason that *hyphens* are not placed between the syllables is, that the printer had not enough of them.

As the Indians had no letters, they had no orthography. The Delaware language being differently spelt from the Virginian, may not always arise from a difference in the languages; for strangers who learn the language of an Indian nation, finding no orthography, are at liberty, in writing the language, to use such compositions of letters as they think will best produce the sounds of the words. I have observed that our Europeans of different nations, who learn the same Indian language, form each his own orthography according to the usual sounds given to the letters in his own language. Thus the same words of the Mohock language, written by an English, a French, and a German interpreter, often differ very much in the spelling; and without knowing the usual powers of the letters in the language of the interpreter, one cannot come at the pronunciation of the Indian words. The spelling-book in question was, I think, written by a German.

You mention a Virginian bible. Is it not the bible of the Massachusetts language, translated by Elliot, and printed in New England, about the middle of the last century? I know this bible, but have never heard of one in the Virginian language. Your observations of the similitude between many of the words, and those of the ancient world, are indeed very curious.

This inscription, which you find to be Phœnician, is, I think, near *Taunton* (not *Jannston*, as you write it). There is some account of it in the old Philosophical Transactions. I have never been at the place, but shall be glad to see your remarks on it.\*

The compass appears to have been long known in China before it was known in Europe; unless we suppose it known to Homer, who makes the prince, that lent ships to Ulysses, boast that they had a *spirit* in them by whose directions they could find their way in a cloudy day, or the darkest night. If any Phœnicians arrived in America, I should rather think it was not by the accident of a storm, but in the course of their long and adventurous voyages; and that they coasted from Denmark and Norway, over to Greenland, and down southward by Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, &c. to New England; as the Danes themselves certainly did some ages before Columbus.

Our new American society will be happy in the correspondence you mention, and when it is possible for me, I shall be glad to attend the meetings of your society,† which I am sure must be very instructive. With great and sincere esteem, I have the honor to be, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

\* This supposed *Phœnician inscription*, it has been asserted, consisted only of marks made in the hard clay of a very steep bank on which the native Indians used to sit waiting the approach of wild ducks; and in the mean time sharpening the points of their flint stone arrow-heads, by rubbing them in different directions; by which indentures or impressions were made, which had the appearance of an inscription.

† L'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres.

TO THE REV. DR. COOPER, BOSTON.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, May 15, 1781.

Your sentiments of the present state of our affairs appear to me very judicious, and I am much obliged by your free communication of them. They are often of use here; for you have a name and character among us, that give weight to your opinions.

It gives me great pleasure to learn that your new constitution is at length settled with so great a degree of unanimity and general satisfaction. It seems to me upon the whole an excellent one; and that if there are some particulars that one might have wished a little different, they are such as could not in the present state of things have been well obtained otherwise than they are, and if by experience found inconvenient, will probably be changed hereafter. I would only mention at present one article, that of maintenance for the clergy. It seems to me that by the constitution the Quakers may be obliged to pay the tax for that purpose. But as the great end in imposing it is professedly the promotion of piety, religion, and morality, and those people have found means of securing that end among themselves, without a regular clergy, and their teachers are not allowed to receive money, I should think it not right to tax them, and give the money to the teacher of the parish; but I imagine that in the laws to be made for levying parish taxes this matter may be regulated to their contentment.

I am very sensible of the honor done me by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in choosing me one of their members. I wish I could be of some utility in promoting the noble design of their institution. Perhaps I may, by sending them from

time to time some of the best publications that appear here. I shall begin to make a collection for them.

Your excellent sermon gave me abundance of pleasure, and is much admired by several of my friends who understand English. I propose to get it translated and printed at Geneva, at the end of a translation of your new constitution. Nothing could be happier than your choice of a text, and your application of it. It was not necessary in New England, where every body reads the Bible, and is acquainted with Scripture phrases, that you should note the texts from which you took them; but I have observed in England, as well as in France, that verses and expressions taken from the sacred writings, and not known to be such, appear very strange and awkward to some readers; and I shall therefore in my edition take the liberty of marking the quoted texts in the margin.

I know not whether a *belly-full* has been given to any body by the picking of *my bones*, but picked they now are, and I think it time they should be *at rest*. I am taking measures to obtain that rest for them; happy if, before I die, I can find a few days absolutely at my own disposal! I often form pleasing imaginations of the pleasure I should enjoy as a private person among my friends and compatriots in my native Boston. God only knows whether this pleasure is reserved for me. With the greatest and most sincere esteem, I am, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

TO MESSRS. D. WENDORF AND THOMAS HOPE HEYHGER.  
GENTLEMEN,

Passy, June 8, 1781.

I received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me the 31st past, relating to your ship sup-

posed to be retaken from the English by an American privateer and carried into Morlaix. I apprehend that you have been misinformed, as I do not know of any American privateer at present in these seas. I have the same sentiments with you of the injustice of the English, in their treatment of your nation. They seem at present to have renounced all pretension to any other honor than that of being the first piratical state in the world. There are three employments which I wish the law of nations would protect, so that they should never be molested or interrupted by enemies even in time of war; I mean farmers, fishermen, and merchants; because their employments are not only innocent, but for the common subsistence and benefit of the human species in general. As men grow more enlightened, we may hope that this will in time be the case. Till then we must submit as well as we can to the evils we cannot remedy. I have the honor to be, gentlemen, &c. &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO W. CARMICHAEL, ESQ. MADRID.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, Aug. 24, 1781.

We are all much obliged to Count de Montmorin for his friendly assistance in our affairs. Please to present him my thankful acknowledgments.

The congress have done me the honor to refuse my resignation, and insist on my continuing in their service till the peace. I must therefore buckle again to business, and thank God that my health and spirits are of late improved. I fancy it may have been a double mortification to those enemies you have mentioned to me, that I should ask as a favor what they hoped to vex me by taking from me; and



that I should nevertheless be continued. But these sort of considerations should never influence our conduct. We ought always to do what appears best to be done, without much regarding what others may think of it. I call this continuance an honor, and I really esteem it to be a greater than my first appointment, when I consider that all the interest of my enemies, united with my own request, were not sufficient to prevent it.

I have not yet received the works of your Economical Society, or those of its founder. I suppose you have not met with an opportunity of sending them. The letter you propose sending to our philosophical society will be very acceptable to them. I shall be glad to peruse the copy you propose passing through my hands.

Yours, B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE REV. MR. WM. NIXON, AN ENGLISH PRISONER  
ON PAROLE AT VALOGNE.

REV. SIR, Passy, Sept. 5, 1781.

I duly received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me the 25th past, together with the valuable little book, of which you are the author. There can be no doubt but that a gentleman of your learning and abilities might make a very useful member of society in our new country, and meet with encouragement there, either as an instructor in one of our universities, or as a clergyman of the church of Ireland. But I am not empowered to engage any person to go over thither, and my abilities to assist the distressed are very limited. I suppose you will soon be set at liberty in England by the cartel for the exchange of prisoners: in the mean time, if *five Louis*

*d'ors* may be of present service to you, please to draw on me for that sum, and your bill shall be paid on sight. Some time or other you may have an opportunity of assisting with an equal sum a stranger who has equal need of it. Do so. By that means you will discharge any obligation you may suppose yourself under to me. Enjoin him to do the same on occasion. By pursuing such a practice, much good may be done with little money. Let kind offices go round. Mankind are all of a family. I have the honor to be, Rev. Sir, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE HON. DANIEL OF ST. THOMAS JENIFER, ESQ.  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS.

SIR,

Passy, Sept. 13, 1781.

It gave me great satisfaction to find, by the unanimous choice you mention, that my services had not been unacceptable to congress; and to hear also that they were favorably disposed towards my grandson, Temple Franklin. It was my desire to quit public business, fearing it might suffer in my hands through the infirmities incident to my time of life. But as they are pleased to think I may still be useful, I submit to their judgment, and shall do my best.

I immediately forwarded the letter you enclosed for Mr. Lowndes; and if in any thing else I can do you service or pleasure here, please to command me freely. I have the honor to be, with great regard, Sir, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

TO RICHARD BACHE, ESQ. PHILADELPHIA.

DEAR SON,

Passy, Sept. 13, 1781.

I have read Mr. Wharton's pamphlet. The facts, as far as I know them, are as he states them. Jus-

tice is, I think, on the side of those who contracted for the lands.\* But moral and political right sometimes differ, and sometimes are both subdued by might.

I received and thank you for several copies of the Indian spelling-book. I received also the German and English newspapers.

Among my papers in the trunk, which I unhappily left in the care of Mr. Galloway, were eight or ten quire or two quire books, of rough drafts of my letters, containing all my correspondence, when in England, for near twenty years. I shall be very sorry if they too are lost. Don't you think it possible, by going up into that country, and inquiring a little among the neighbors, you might possibly hear of, and recover some of them? I should not have left them in his hands, if he had not deceived me, by saying, that though he was before otherwise inclined, yet that since the king had declared us out of his protection, and the parliament by an act had made our properties plunder, he would go as far in defence of his country as any man; and accordingly he had lately with pleasure given colors to a regiment of militia, and an entertainment to 400 of them before his house. I thought he was become a stanch friend to the glorious cause. I was mistaken. As he was a friend of my son's,† to whom in my will I had left all my books and papers, I made him one of my executors, and put the trunk of papers into his hands, imagining them safer in his house (which was out of the way of any probable march of enemies' troops) than in my own. It was very unlucky.

My love to Sally and the children. I shall soon

\* The Indian grant.

† Governor Franklin.

write to all my friends. At present I am pinched in time, and can only add that I am ever  
your affectionate father,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO FS. HOPKINSON, ESQ. PHILADELPHIA.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, Sept. 13, 1781.

I am sorry for the loss of the *squibs*. Every thing of yours gives me pleasure.

As to the friends and enemies you just mention, I have hitherto, thanks to God, had plenty of the former kind; they have been my treasure; and it has perhaps been of no disadvantage to me that I have had a few of the latter. They serve to put us upon correcting the faults we have, and avoiding those we are in danger of having. They counteract the mischief flattery might do us, and their malicious attacks make our friends more zealous in serving us and promoting our interest. At present I do not know of more than two such enemies that I enjoy, viz. \* \* \* and \* \* \*. I deserved the enmity of the latter, because I might have avoided it by paying him a compliment, which I neglected. That of the former I owe to the people of France, who happened to respect me too much and him too little; which I could bear and he could not. They are unhappy that they cannot make every body hate me as much as they do; and I should be so if my friends did not love me much more than those gentlemen can possibly love one another.

Enough of this subject. Let me know if you are in possession of my gimcrack instruments, and if you have made any new experiments. I lent many years ago a large glass globe mounted, to Mr. Coombe, and

an electric battery of bottles, which I remember ; perhaps there were some other things. He may have had them so long as to think them his own. Pray ask him for them, and keep them for me together with the rest.

You have a new crop of prose writers. I see in your papers many of their fictitious names, but nobody tells me the real. You will oblige me by a little of your literary history. Adieu, my dear friend, and believe me ever yours affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO EDMUND BURKE, ESQ. M. P.

SIR,

Passy, Oct. 15, 1781.

I received but a few days since your very friendly letter of August last, on the subject of General Burgoyne.

Since the foolish part of mankind will make wars from time to time with each other, not having sense enough otherwise to settle their differences, it certainly becomes the wiser part, who cannot prevent those wars, to alleviate as much as possible the calamities attending them. Mr. Burke always stood high in my esteem ; but his affectionate concern for his friend renders him still more amiable, and makes the honor he does me of admitting me of the number, still more precious.

I do not think the congress have any wish to persecute General Burgoyne. I never heard till I received your letter that they had recalled him : if they have made such a resolution, it must be, I suppose, a conditional one, to take place in case their offer of exchanging him for Mr. Laurens should not be accepted ; a resolution intended merely to enforce that offer.

I have just received an authentic copy of the resolve containing that offer, and authorising me to make it. As I have no communication with your ministers, I send it enclosed to you.\* If you can find any means of negotiating this business, I am sure the restoring another worthy man to his family and friends, will be an addition to your pleasure. With great and invariable respect and affection, I am, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MESSRS. KORNMANN.

GENTLEMEN,

Passy, Nov. 21, 1781.

Enclosed is the answer you desire to the letter sent me from *Conigsberg*.

I have the honor to be, gentlemen, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

MADAM,

Passy, Nov. 21, 1781.

I received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me the 26th of last month: in answer to which I ought to inform you, that I was born in America now near 76 years since, that I never was in Ireland till the year 1773, which was for a few weeks only, and I did not pass thence to America with any person of my name, but returned to England; nor had I ever any knowledge of the John Franklin you mention. I have exact accounts of every person of my family since the year 1555, when it was established in England, and am certain that none of them but myself since that time were ever in Ireland. The name of Franklin is common among the English of the two nations, but there are a number of different families who bear it, and who

\* Wanting.

have no relation to each other. It would be a pleasure to me to discover a relation in Europe, possessing the amiable sentiments expressed in your letter. I assure you I should not disown the meanest. I should also be glad if I could give you a satisfactory account of your family; but I really know nothing of them. I have therefore not the honor of being related to them, but I have that of being, madam, yours, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO GOV. POWNALL, LONDON.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, Nov. 23, 1781.

I wish most heartily with you that this cursed war was at an end: but I despair of seeing it finished in my time. Your thirsty nation has not yet drank enough of our blood. I am authorised to treat of peace whenever she is disposed to it, but I saw inconveniences in meeting and discoursing with you on the subject, or with any one not avowed by your ministry; having already experienced such, in several instances.—My best wishes attend you, being with the old long-continued esteem, dear sir, your most obedient humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MRS. C. EDES.

MADAM,

Passy, Dec. 13, 1781.

I return enclosed the letter from my friend, Mr. Bridgen, which I received from you last night. You will be so good as to acquaint him in answer to his first question, *if any fund was established for the support of Mr. Laurens?* that being informed about the middle of last month by a friend in London of Mr. L.'s being in want of money, I wrote on the 19th to Mr. Hodgson, a merchant in Coleman Street, in

whose hands I had lodged cash for the support of prisoners, to hold 100*l.* of it at the disposition of Mr. Laurens; and I since hear that on a like intimation to Mr. Adams in Holland, he has ordered another 100*l.* to be applied to the same purpose. I have never heard that any fund was established in America for the use of that gentleman; probably it has not been known there that he had need of it. The second question *if any measures had been taken for his relief?* will be answered by acquainting Mr. B. that the congress passed a resolution to offer the exchange of General Burgoyne for him, and empowered me to make the offer: that Mr. Burke having written to me in favor of his friend, General Burgoyne, on a supposition that the congress intended to recal him, I sent a copy of the resolution to Mr. Burke, and requested he would charge himself with the negotiation. I have since heard nothing, either from Mr. Hodgson or Mr. Burke; and as it is said a packet was lately lost between Ostend and England, I begin to fear my letters have miscarried, and shall by the first post send copies. I wish Mr. Bridgen would however apply to both those gentlemen, learn what has been done, and through you acquaint me with it. I beg you would assure Mr. Bridgen of my best wishes and affectionate attachment. I hope his affairs in Carolina have been settled to his mind. With much esteem, I have the honor to be, madam,

yours, &c.                    B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. About the beginning of the year, having heard a report that Mr. Laurens was ill used, I wrote a little remonstrance to Sir Grey Cooper on the occasion; who replied, by acquainting me that on



inquiry he found the report to be groundless; and by sending me a letter he had received from the lieutenant of the Tower, which assured him in the strongest terms, that Mr. Laurens was perfectly satisfied with the treatment he received, and frequently expressed his thankfulness for the same; this made me easy, hearing nothing afterwards to the contrary till lately.

TO MISS LAURENS.

MADAM,

Passy, Dec. 29, 1781.

I received your very sensible letter of the 14th past. Your brother, Colonel Laurens, being here when I received the former, I informed him of the steps I had then taken respecting your good father, and requested him to answer your letter for me. I did suppose he had done it; but his great and constant occupation while here, might occasion his omitting it. The purport was, that on a report of your father's being harshly treated, I wrote in his behalf to an old friend, Sir Grey Cooper, secretary of the treasury, complaining of it. His answer was, that he had inquired, and found the report groundless; and he sent me enclosed a letter he received from the lieutenant of the Tower, assuring him that Mr. Laurens was treated with great kindness, was very sensible of it, thankful for it, and frequently expressed his satisfaction: on this I became more easy on his account; but a little before I received your letter, I had one (from Mr. Benjamin Vaughan, who is connected with the family of Mr. Manning) which informed me that Mr. Laurens was really in want of necessities; and desired to know if any provision was made for his subsistence. I wrote immediately

to Mr. Hodgson, in whose hands I had lodged some money, requesting him to hold 100*l.* of it at the disposition of Mr. Laurens, and to acquaint Mr. Vaughan with it. About this time I received two letters ; one from Mr. Burke, member of parliament, complaining that his friend, Général Burgoyne, (in England on his parole) was reclaimed and recalled by congress, and requesting I would find some means of permitting him to remain. The other was from the congress, enclosing a resolve that impowered me to offer General Burgoyne in exchange for Mr. Laurens. Perceiving by Mr. Burke's letter that he was very desirous of obtaining his friend's liberty, and having no immediate intercourse with the British ministry, I thought I could not do better than to enclose the resolve in my answer to his letter, and request him to negociate the exchange. When I received yours, I was in expectation of having soon an answer from Mr. Burke and Mr. Hodgson, which would enable me to give you more satisfactory information. I therefore delayed writing to you from post to post till I should hear from them ; and fearing from the length of time that my letters had miscarried, I sent copies of them. It is but yesterday that I received an answer from Mr. Hodgson, dated the 21st instant, in which he writes me : "I received your favor of the 19th ultimo ; I immediately acquainted Mr. Vaughan with your directions concerning the supplying Mr. Laurens. He has been acquainted therewith ; but hitherto no application has been made to me for the money : whenever it is, you may be assured it shall be complied with." No answer is come to my hands from Mr. Burke ; but I see by a newspaper Mr. Hodgson sends me,

that he has endeavored to execute the commission. I enclose that paper for your satisfaction, together with a copy of your father's petition to parliament, on which I do not find that they have yet come to any result: but observing that he makes no complaint in that petition, of his being pinched in the article of subsistence, I hope that part of our intelligence from London may be a mistake. I shall, however, you may depend, leave nothing undone that is in my power, to obtain his release, and assure you that the thought of the pleasure it must afford a child, whose mind is of so tender a sensibility, and filled with such true filial duty and affection, will be an additional spur to my endeavors: I suppose Mr. Adams has informed you that he has ordered another 100*l.* sterling to be paid Mr. Laurens; and I hope you will soon have the happiness of hearing that he is at liberty. With very great regard, I have the honor to be, madam, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

LETTER TO \*\*\*\*\*.

GENTLEMEN,

Passy, Jan. 4, 1782.

There is no doubt but that a body of sober, industrious, and ingenious artisans, men of honest and religious principles, such as you and your friends are described to be, would be a valuable acquisition to any country; and I am certain you would meet with a kind and friendly reception in Pennsylvania, and be put into possession of all the rights and privileges of free citizens; but neither that government, nor any other in America that I know of, has ever been at any public expense to augment the number of its inhabitants. All who are established there,

have come at their own charge. The country affords to strangers a good climate, fine wholesome air, plenty of provisions, good laws, just and *cheap* government; with all the liberties, civil and religious, that reasonable men can wish for. These inducements are so great, and the number of people in all the nations of Europe, who wish to partake of them, is so considerable, that if the states were to undertake transporting people at the expense of the public, no revenue that they have would be sufficient. Having therefore no orders or authority, either from the congress or the state of Pennsylvania, to procure settlers or manufacturers, by engaging to defray them, I cannot enter into the contract proposed in your second article. The other articles would meet with no difficulty. Men are not forced there into the public service, and a special law might be easily obtained to give you a property for seven years in the useful inventions you may introduce.

You will do well to weigh seriously the following consideration:—If you can establish yourselves there during the war, it is certain that your manufactures will be much more profitable, as they sell at very high prices now, owing to the difficulty and risk of transporting them from Europe. But then your passages also will be more expensive, and your risk greater of having your project ruined, by being taken, stripped, and imprisoned. If you wait till a peace, you will pass much cheaper and more securely, and you have a better chance of settling yourselves and posterity in a comfortable and happy situation. On these points your prudence must determine. If I were to advise, I should think it rather most prudent to wait for a peace, and then to victual a vessel

in some port of Ireland, where it can be done cheap, to which you might easily pass from Liverpool. There are, I understand, some apprehensions that your ministers may procure a law to restrain the emigration of manufacturers. But I think that, weak and wicked as they are, and tyrannical as they are disposed to be, they will hardly venture upon an act that shall make a prison of England to confine men for no other crime than that of being useful and industrious; and to discourage the learning of useful mechanic arts, by declaring, that as soon as a man is master of his business, he shall lose his liberty, and become a prisoner for life; while they suffer their idle and extravagant gentry to travel and reside abroad at their pleasure, spending the incomes of their estates, racked from their laborious honest tenants, in foreign follies, and among French and Italian whores and fiddlers. Such a law would be too glaringly unjust to be borne with.

I wish you success in what you may resolve to undertake; and you will find me ever your assured friend and humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY GENERAL WASHINGTON.

SIR,

Passy, April 2, 1782.

I received duly the honor of your letter, accompanying the capitulation of Gen. Cornwallis. All the world agree that no expedition was ever better planned or better executed: it has made a great addition to the military reputation you had already acquired, and brightens the glory that surrounds your name, and that must accompany it to our latest posterity. No news could possibly make me more happy. The infant Hercules has now strangled the

two serpents\* that attacked him in his cradle, and I trust his future history will be answerable.

This will be presented to you by the Count de Ségur. He is son of the Marquis de Ségur, minister of war, and our very good friend; but I need not claim your regards to the young gentleman on that score; his amiable personal qualities, his very sensible conversation, and his zeal for the cause of liberty, will obtain and secure your esteem, and be better recommendation than any I can give him.

The English seem not to know either how to continue the war, or to make peace with us. Instead of entering into a regular treaty, for putting an end to a contest they are tired of, they have voted in parliament, that the recovery of America by force is impracticable, that an offensive war against us ought not to be continued, and that whoever advises it shall be deemed an enemy to his country.

Thus the garrisons of New York and Charlestown, if continued there, must sit still, being only allowed to defend themselves. The ministry not understanding or approving this making of peace by halves, have quitted their places; but we have no certain account here who is to succeed them, so that the measures likely to be taken are yet uncertain; probably we shall know something of them before the Marquis de la Fayette takes his departure. There are grounds for good hopes, however; but I think we should not therefore relax in our preparations for a vigorous campaign, as that nation is subject to sudden fluctuations; and, though somewhat humiliated at pre-

\* Alluding to the surrender of the two British armies under BURGOYNE and CORNWALLIS, Oct. 17, 1777, and Oct. 1781.

sent, a little success in the West Indies may dissipate their present fears, recal their natural insolence, and occasion the interruption of negociation, and a continuance of the war. We have great stores purchased here for the use of your army, which will be sent as soon as transports can be procured for them to go under good convoy.

My best wishes always have, and always will attend you; being with the greatest and most sincere esteem and respect, sir, your excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,     B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE CHEVALIER DE CHASTELLUX.\*

*(In America.)*

DEAR SIR,

Passy, April 6, 1782.

It gave me great pleasure to hear by the officers returned last winter from your army, that you continued in good health. You will see by the public papers that the English begin to be weary of the war; and they have reason, having suffered many losses, having four nations of enemies on their hands, few men to spare, little money left, and very bad heads. The latter they have lately changed. As yet we know not what measures their new ministry will take. People generally think they will be employed by the king to extricate him from his present difficulties, by obtaining a peace, and that then he will kick them out again; they being all men that he abominates, and who have been forced upon him by the parliament.

The commons have already made a sort of half peace with us Americans, by forbidding their troops

\* Afterwards the Marquis de Chastellux.

on the continent to act offensively ; and by a new law they have impowered the king to complete it. As yet I hear nothing of the terms they mean to propose ; indeed they have had hardly time to form them. I know they wish to detach us from France ; but that is impossible.

I congratulate you on the success of your last glorious campaign. Establishing the liberties of America will not only make that people happy, but will have some effect in diminishing the misery of those, who in other parts of the world groan under despotism, by rendering it more circumspect, and inducing it to govern with a lighter hand. A philosopher endowed with those strong sentiments of humanity that are manifested in your excellent writings,\* must enjoy great satisfaction in having contributed so extensively by his sword, as well as by his pen, to the *félicité publique*.

M. le Comte de Ségur has desired of me a line of recommendation to you. I consider his request rather as a compliment to me, than as asking what may be of use to him ; since I find that all who know him here esteem and love him, and he is certainly not unknown to you.

Dare I confess to you that I am your rival with Madame G\*\*\* ? I need not tell you that I am not a dangerous one : I perceive that she loves you very much ; and so does, dear sir, yours, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

\* Principally a Treatise on PUBLIC HAPPINESS.



TO HIS EXCELLENCY GEN. WASHINGTON.

SIR,

Passy, April 8, 1782.

I did myself the honor of writing to you a few days since by the Comte de Ségur. This line is chiefly to present the Prince de Broglie to your Excellency, who goes over to join the army of Mons. de Rochambeau. He bears an excellent character here, is a hearty friend to our cause, and I am persuaded you will have a pleasure in his conversation. I take leave, therefore, to recommend him to those civilities which you are always happy in showing to strangers of merit and distinction.

I have heretofore congratulated your Excellency on your victories over our enemy's generals; I can now do the same on your having overthrown their politicians. Your late successes have so strengthened the hands of opposition in parliament, that they are become the majority, and have compelled the king to dismiss all his old ministers and their adherents. The unclean spirits he was possessed with are now cast out of him, but it is imagined that as soon as he has obtained a peace, they will return with others worse than themselves; *and the last state of that man* (as the Scripture says) *shall be worse than the first.*

As soon as we can learn any thing certain of the projects of the new ministry, I shall take the first opportunity of communicating them. With the greatest esteem and respect, I am, sir, your excellency's, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE REV. DR. PRIESTLEY.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, June 7, 1782.

I have always great pleasure in hearing from you, in learning that you are well, and that you con-

tinue your experiments. I should rejoice much if I could once more recover the leisure to search with you into the works of nature; I mean the *inanimate*, not the *animate* or moral part of them: the more I discovered of the former, the more I admired them; the more I know of the latter, the more I am disgusted with them. Men, I find to be a sort of beings very badly constructed, as they are generally more easily provoked than reconciled, more disposed to do mischief to each other than to make reparation, much more easily deceived than undeceived, and having more pride and even pleasure in killing than in begetting one another; for without a blush they assemble in great armies at noon-day to destroy, and when they have killed as many as they can, they exaggerate the number to augment the fancied glory; but they creep into corners, or cover themselves with the darkness of night, when they mean to beget, as being ashamed of a virtuous action. A virtuous action it would be, and a vicious one the killing of them, if the species were really worth producing or preserving; but of this I begin to doubt. I know you have no such doubts, because in your zeal for their welfare, you are taking a great deal of pains to save their souls. Perhaps as you grow older, you may look upon this as a hopeless project, or an idle amusement, repent of having murdered in mephitic air so many honest, harmless mice, and wish that to prevent mischief you had used boys and girls instead of them. In what light we are viewed by superior beings, may be gathered from a piece of late West-India news, which possibly has not yet reached you. A young angel of distinction being sent down to this world on some business, for the first time, had an

old courier-spirit assigned him as a guide: they arrived over the seas of Martinico, in the middle of the long day of obstinate fight between the fleets of Rodney and De Grasse. When through the clouds of smoke, he saw the fire of the guns, the decks covered with mangled limbs, and bodies dead or dying; the ships sinking, burning, or blown into the air; and the quantity of pain, misery, and destruction, the crews yet alive were thus with so much eagerness dealing round to one another, he turned angrily to his guide, and said, "You blundering blockhead, you are ignorant of your business; you undertook to conduct me to the earth, and you have brought me into hell!" "No, Sir," says the guide, "I have made no mistake; this is really the earth, and these are men. Devils never treat one another in this cruel manner; they have more sense, and more of what men (vainly) call humanity."

But to be serious, my dear old friend, I love you as much as ever, and I love all the honest souls that meet at the London Coffee-house. I only wonder how it happened that they and my other friends in England came to be such good creatures in the midst of so perverse a generation. I long to see them and you once more, and I labor for peace with more earnestness, that I may again be happy in your sweet society.

I showed your letter to the Duke de la Rochefoucault, who thinks with me that the new experiments you have made are extremely curious, and he has given me thereupon a note which I enclose, and I request you would furnish me with the answer desired.

Yesterday the *Count du Nord*\* was at the Academy of Sciences, when sundry experiments were exhibited for his entertainment; among them, one by M. Lavoisier, to show that the strongest fire we yet know is made in a charcoal blown upon with dephlogisticated air. In a heat so produced, he melted platina presently, the fire being much more powerful than that of the strongest burning mirror. Adieu, and believe me ever, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO DR. SHIPLEY, BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH. †

Passy, June 10, 1782.

I received and read the letter from my dear and much respected friend, with infinite pleasure. After so long a silence, and the long continuance of its unfortunate causes, a line from you was a prognostic of happier times approaching, when we may converse

\* The Grand Duke of Russia, afterwards Emperor Paul I.

† JONATHAN SHIPLEY took his degrees at Christ Church, and in 1743 was made Prebendary of Winchester. After travelling, in 1745, with the Duke of Cumberland, he was promoted in 1749 to a Canonry at Christ Church, became Dean of Winchester in 1760, and in 1769 Bishop of St. Asaph. He was author of some elegant verses on the death of Queen Caroline, and published besides, some poems and sermons, and died in 1788.

He was an intimate and much esteemed friend of Dr. Franklin's, and a warm and eloquent advocate in parliament in favor of America. Of the latter his "*Speech intended to have been spoken*" on the bill for altering the charter of the colony of Massachusetts Bay, (printed for Cadell in 1774) remains an honorable testimony. It has been thus noticed by a contemporary writer:—"Among all the productions, ancient or modern, it would be difficult to find an instance of more consummate elegance than in a printed speech intended to be spoken in the House of Lords."—(*Introduction to Mainwaring's Sermons*, 1780.)

and communicate freely, without danger from the malevolence of men enraged by the ill success of their distracted projects.

I long with you for the return of peace, on the general principles of humanity. The hope of being able to pass a few more of my last days happy in the sweet conversations and company I once enjoyed at Twyford,\* is a particular motive that adds strength to the general wish, and quickens my industry to procure that best of blessings. After much occasion to consider the folly and mischiefs of a state of warfare, and the little or no advantage obtained even by those nations who have conducted it with the most success, I have been apt to think that there has never been, nor ever will be, any such thing as a *good* war, or a *bad* peace.

You ask if I still relish my old studies? I relish them, but I cannot pursue them. My time is engrossed unhappily with other concerns. I requested of the congress last year, my discharge from this public station, that I might enjoy a little leisure in the evening of a long life of business; but it was refused me, and I have been obliged to drudge on a little longer.

You are happy as your years come on, in having that dear and most amiable family about you. Four daughters! how rich! I have but one, and she necessarily detained from me at a thousand leagues distance. I feel the want of that tender care of me which might be expected from a daughter, and would give the world for one. Your shades are all placed in a row over my fire-place, so that I not only have

\* The country residence of the bishop.

you always in my mind, but constantly before my eyes.

The cause of liberty and America has been greatly obliged to you. I hope you will live long to see that country flourish under its new constitution, which I am sure will give you great pleasure. Will you permit me to express another hope, that now your friends are in power, they will take the first opportunity of showing the sense they ought to have of your virtues and your merit!

Please to make my best respects acceptable to Mrs. Shipley, and embrace for me tenderly all our dear children. With the utmost esteem, respect, and veneration, I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO DR. INGENHAUSZ.\*

(EXTRACT.)

Passy, June 21, 1782.

I am sorry that any misunderstanding should arise between you and Dr. ———. The indiscretions of friends on both sides often occasion such misunderstandings. When they produce public altercations, the ignorant are diverted at the expense of the learned. I hope, therefore, that you will omit the polemic piece in your French edition, and take no public notice of the improper behavior of your friend; but go on with your excellent experiments, produce facts, improve science, and do good to mankind. Reputation will follow, and the little injustices of contemporary laborers will be forgotten: my example may encourage you, or else I should not mention it. You know that when my papers were

\* JOHN INGENHAUSZ, F. R. S. an eminent physician and chemist, born at Breda, 1730, died in 1799.

first published, the Abbé Nollet, then high in reputation, attacked them in a book of letters. An answer was expected from me, but I made none, to that book nor to any other. They are now all neglected, and the truth seems to be established : you can always employ your time better than in polemics.

Monsieur Lavoisier the other day showed an experiment at the Academy of Sciences, to the Comte du Nord, that is said to be curious. He kindled an hollow charcoal, and blew into it a stream of dephlogisticated air. In this focus, which is said to be the hottest fire human art has yet been able to produce, he melted platina in a few minutes.

Our American affairs wear a better aspect now than at any time heretofore. Our councils are perfectly united ; our people all armed and disciplined. Much and frequent service as militia, has indeed made them all soldiers. Our enemies are much diminished, and reduced to two or three garrisons ; our commerce and agriculture flourish. England at length sees the difficulty of conquering us, and no longer demands submission, but asks for peace. She would now think herself happy to obtain a federal union with us, and will endeavor it ; but perhaps will be disappointed, as it is the interest of all Europe to prevent it. I last year requested of congress to release me from this service, that I might spend the evening of life more agreeably in philosophic leisure ; but I was refused. If I had succeeded, it was my intention to make the tour of Italy with my grandson, pass into Germany, and spend some time happily with you, whom I have always loved, ever since I knew you, with uninterrupted affection. We have

lost our common friend, the excellent Pringle! \* How many pleasing hours you and I have passed together in his company! I must soon follow him, being now in my seventy-seventh year; but you have yet a prospect of many years of usefulness still before you, which I hope you will fully enjoy; and I am persuaded you will ever kindly remember your truly affectionate friend,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MISS ALEXANDER.

(EXTRACT.)

Passy, June 24, 1782.

I am not at all displeased that the thesis and dedication with which we were threatened are blown over, for I dislike much all sorts of mummery. The republic of letters has gained no reputation, whatever else it may have gained, by the commerce of dedications: I never made one, and I never desired that one should be made to me. When I submitted to receive this, it was from the bad habit I have long had of doing every thing that ladies desire me to do: there is no refusing any thing to Madame la Marck, nor to you. I have been to pay my respects to that amiable lady, not merely because it was a compliment due to her, but because I love her, which induces me to excuse her not letting me in; the same reason I should have for excusing your faults, if you had any. I have not seen your papa since the receipt of your pleasing letter, so could arrange nothing with him respecting the carriage. During seven or eight days I shall be very busy: after that

\* Sir John Pringle, Bart. born in Roxburghshire, in 1707, physician to the queen's household, afterwards to the king, and president to the Royal Society; died in 1782. He wrote "*Observations on Diseases of the Army*," &c. &c.



you shall hear from me, and the carriage shall be at your service. How could you think of writing to me about chimneys and fires, in such weather as this? Now is the time for the frugal lady you mention to save her wood, obtain *plus de chaleur*, and lay it up against winter, as people do ice against summer. Frugality is an enriching virtue; a virtue I never could acquire in myself: but I was once lucky enough to find it in a wife, who thereby became a fortune to me. Do you possess it? If you do, and I were twenty years younger, I would give your father one thousand guineas for you. I know you would be worth more to me as a *ménagère*; but I am covetous and love good bargains. Adieu, my dear friend, and believe me ever yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MR. HUTTON.\*

MY OLD AND DEAR FRIEND,

Passy, July 7, 1782.

A letter written by you to M. Bertin, ministre d'Etat, containing an account of the abominable

\* JAMES HUTTON, son of Doctor Hutton, (who in the early part of his life had been a bookseller) was for many years secretary to the society of Moravians. He died April 25, 1795, in his 80th year, at Oxstead Cottage, Surry; and was buried in the Moravian cemetery at Chelsea. He was a well-known character, and very generally esteemed. He was a faithful brother of the Moravian fraternity fifty-five years; the latter part of his life was spent literally in going about doing good, and his charities were confined to no sect. He married a lady of the Moravian nation and religion, but had no children, and was a widower some years before his death. Mr. Hutton possessed strong sense, with quick feelings and apprehensions, which the illumination of his countenance evinced even at seventy, though his difficulty of hearing was such, that he could only converse by the assistance of an ear-trumpet.

murders committed by some of the frontier people on the poor Moravian Indians, has given me infinite pain and vexation. The dispensations of Providence in this world puzzle my weak reason: I cannot comprehend why cruel men should have been permitted thus to destroy their fellow-creatures. Some of the Indians may be supposed to have committed sins, but one cannot think the little children had committed any worthy of death. Why has a single man in England, who happens to love blood, and to hate Americans, been permitted to gratify that bad temper by hiring German murderers, and joining them with his own, to destroy, in a continued course of bloody years, near 100,000 human creatures, many of them possessed of useful talents, virtues, and abilities, to which he has no pretension? It is he who has furnished the savages with hatchets and scalping knives, and engages them to fall upon our defenceless farmers, and murder them with their wives and children, paying for their scalps, of which the account kept in America already amounts, as I have heard, to near *two thousand*! Perhaps the people of the frontiers, exasperated by the cruelties of the Indians, have been induced to kill all Indians that fall into their hands without distinction; so that even these horrid murders of our poor Moravians may be laid to his charge. And yet this man lives, enjoys all the good things this world can afford, and is surrounded

He was highly esteemed by their present majesties, and well known to many of the nobility and men of letters: nor was he refused admittance to the highest ranks, (even at Buckingham House) though his ardent benevolence inclined him greatly to neglect his own dress, that he might the better feed the hungry and cover the naked.

by flatterers who keep even his conscience quiet by telling him he is the best of princes! I wonder at this, but I cannot therefore part with the comfortable belief of a divine Providence; and the more I see the impossibility, from the number and extent of his crimes, of giving equivalent punishment to a wicked man in this life, the more I am convinced of a future state, in which all that here appears to be wrong shall be set right, all that is crooked made straight. In this faith let you and I, my dear friend, comfort ourselves; it is the only comfort in the present dark scene of things that is allowed us.

I shall not fail to write to the government of America, urging that effectual care may be taken to protect and save the remainder of those unhappy people.

Since writing the above, I have received a Philadelphia paper, containing some account of the same horrid transaction, a little different, and some circumstances alleged as excuses or palliations, but extremely weak and insufficient. I send it to you enclosed. With great and sincere esteem, I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE  
UNITED STATES.

SIR,

Passy, Sept. 3, 1782.

The accounts of the general sentiments of our people respecting propositions from England, and the rejoicings on the birth of the Dauphin, give pleasure here; and it affords me much satisfaction to find the conduct of congress approved by all that hear or speak of it, and to see all the marks of a

constantly growing regard for us, and confidence in us, among those in whom such sentiments are most to be desired.

You wish to know what allowance I make to my private secretary. My grandson, W. Temple Franklin, came over with me, served me as private secretary during the time of the commissioners, and no secretary to the commission arriving, though we had been made to expect one, he did business for us all, and this without any allowance for his services, though both Mr. Lee and Mr. Deane at times mentioned it to me as a thing proper to be done, and a justice due to him. When I became appointed sole minister here, and the whole business which the commissioners had before divided with me came into my hands, I was obliged to exact more service from him, and he was indeed, by being so long in the business, become capable of doing more. At length, in the beginning of the year 1781, considering his constant close attention to the duties required of him, and his having thereby missed the opportunity of studying the law, for which he had been intended, I determined to make him some compensation for the time past, and fix some appointment for the time to come, till the pleasure of congress respecting him should be taken. I accordingly settled an account with him; allowing him from the beginning of December, 1776, to the end of 1777, the sum of 3400 livres; and for the year 1778, the sum of 4000 livres; for 1779, 4300 livres; and for 1780, 6000 livres: since that time, I have allowed him at the rate of 300 louis per annum, being what I saw had been allowed by congress to the secretary of Mr. William Lee, who could not have had, I imagine, a fourth

part of the business to go through ; since my secretary, besides the writing and copying the papers relative to my common ministerial transactions, has had all those occasioned by my acting in the various employments of judge of admiralty, consul, purchaser of goods for the public, &c. besides that of the acceptor of the congress bills, a business that requires being always at home; bills coming by post from different ports and countries, and often requiring immediate answers, whether good or not; and to that end, it being necessary to examine them by the books exactly kept of all preceding acceptations, in order to detect double presentations, which happen very frequently, the great number of these bills makes almost sufficient business for one person, and the confinement they occasion is such that we cannot allow ourselves a day's excursion into the country, and the want of exercise has hurt our healths in several instances. The congress pay much larger salaries to some secretaries, who I believe deserve them, but not more than my grandson does; the comparatively small one I have allowed to him, his fidelity, exactitude and address in transacting business, being really what one could wish in such an officer, and the genteel appearance a young gentleman in his station obliges him to make, requiring at least such an income. I do not mention the extraordinary business that has been imposed upon us in this embassy as a foundation for demanding higher salaries than others. I never solicited for a public office either for myself or any relative, yet I never refused one that I was capable of executing, when public service was in question ; and I never bargained for salary, but contented myself with whatever my

constituents were pleased to allow me. The congress will therefore consider every article charged in my account distinct from the salary originally voted, not as what I presumed to insist upon, but as what I propose only for their consideration, and they will allow what they think proper. You desire an accurate estimate of those contingent expenses. I enclose copies of two letters which passed between Mr. Adams and me on the subject, and show the articles of which they consist. Their amount in different years may be found in my accounts, except the article of house-rent, which has never yet been settled, M. de Chaumont, our landlord, having originally proposed to leave it till the end of the war, and then to accept for it a piece of American land from the congress, such as they might judge equivalent: if the congress did intend all contingent charges whatever to be included in the salary, and do not think proper to pay on the whole so much, in that case I would humbly suggest that the saving may be most conveniently made by a diminution of the salary, leaving the contingencies to be charged; because they may necessarily be very different in different years and in different courts. I have been the more diffuse on this subject, as your letter gave me occasion for it, and it is probably the last time I shall mention it.

Be pleased to present my dutiful respects to congress; assure them of my best services, and believe me to be, with sincere esteem, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. As you will probably lay this letter before congress, I take the liberty of joining to it an extract of my letter to the president, of the 12th of March,

1781, and of repeating my request therein contained, relative to my grandson. I enclose likewise extracts of letters from Messrs. Jay and Laurens, which both show the regard those gentlemen have for him, and their desire of his being noticed by the congress.\*

B. FRANKLIN.

TO SIR JOSEPH BANKS,

*President of the Royal Society, London.*

DEAR SIR,

Passy, Sept. 9, 1782.

I have just received the very kind friendly letter you were so good as to write to me by Dr. Broussonnet. Be assured that I long earnestly for a return of those peaceful times when I could sit down in sweet society with my English philosophical friends, communicating to each other new discoveries, and proposing improvements of old ones; all tending to extend the power of man over matter, avert or diminish the evils he is subject to, or augment the number of his enjoyments. Much more happy should I be thus employed in your most desirable company, than in that of all the grandees of the earth projecting plans of mischief, however necessary they may be supposed for obtaining greater good.

I am glad to learn by the Doctor that your great work goes on. I admire your magnanimity in the undertaking, and the perseverance with which you have prosecuted it.

I join with you most perfectly in the charming wish you so well express, "that such measures may be taken by both parties as may tend to the elevation of both, rather than the destruction of either." If

\* See page 70 of this volume.

any thing has happened endangering one of them, my comfort is, that I endeavored earnestly to prevent it, and gave honest, faithful advice, which, if it had been regarded, would have been effectual. And still, if proper means are used to produce, not only a peace, but what is much more interesting, a thorough reconciliation, a few years may heal the wounds that have been made in our happiness, and produce a degree of prosperity of which at present we can hardly form a conception. With great and sincere esteem and respect, I am, dear sir, your most obedient and humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO F. HOPKINSON, ESQ. PHILADELPHIA.

EXTRACT.

Passy, Dec. 24, 1782.

I thank you for your ingenious paper in favor of the trees. I own I now wish we had two rows of them in every one of our streets. The comfortable shelter they would afford us, when walking, from our burning summer suns, and the greater coolness of our walls and pavements, would, I conceive, in the improved health of the inhabitants, amply compensate the loss of a house now and then by fire, if such should be the consequence: but a tree is soon felled; and as axes are at hand in every neighborhood, may be down before the engines arrive.

You do well to avoid being concerned in the pieces of personal abuse, so scandalously common in our newspapers, that I am afraid to lend any of them here, till I have examined and laid aside such as would disgrace us, and subject us among strangers to a reflection like that used by a gentleman in a coffee-house to two quarrellers, who after a mutually free use of the words rogue, villain, rascal, scoundrel,



&c. seemed as if they would refer their dispute to him: "I know nothing of you, or your affairs," said he; "I only perceive *that you know one another.*"

The conductor of a newspaper should, methinks, consider himself as in some degree the guardian of his country's reputation, and refuse to insert such writings as may hurt it. If people will print their abuses of one another, let them do it in little pamphlets, and distribute them where they think proper. It is absurd to trouble all the world with them, and unjust to subscribers in distant places, to stuff their paper with matter so unprofitable and so disagreeable. With sincere esteem and affection, I am, my dear friend, ever yours,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO \* \* \*

SIR,

Passy, Jan. 11, 1783.

The two first volumes of your excellent work, which were put into my hands by M. Pio, I perused with great pleasure. They are also much esteemed by some very judicious persons to whom I have lent them. I should have been glad of another copy for one of those friends, who is very desirous of procuring it, but I suppose those you mention to have sent to M. Pio did not arrive. I was glad to learn that you were proceeding to consider the criminal laws. None have more need of reformation. They are every where in so great disorder, and so much injustice is committed in the execution of them, that I have been sometimes inclined to imagine less would exist in the world if there were no such laws, and the punishment of injuries were left to private resentment. I am glad therefore, that you have not suffered yourself to be discouraged by any objections or apprehensions,

and that we may soon expect the satisfaction of seeing the two volumes on that subject which you have now under the press.

With regard to your project of removing to America, though I am sure that a person of your knowledge, just sentiments, and useful talents, would be a valuable acquisition for our country, I cannot encourage you to undertake hastily such a voyage, because for a man to expatriate himself is a serious business, and should be well considered, especially where the distance is so great, and the expense of removing thither with a family, and of returning if the country should not suit you, will be so heavy. I have no orders or authority of any kind to encourage strangers with expectations of employment by our government, nor am I empowered to be at any expense in transporting them, though our country is open, and strangers may establish themselves there, where they soon become citizens, and are respected according to their conduct. Men know, because they feel, the inconveniences of their *present* situation; but they do not know those that may, if they change, attend the *new one*. I wish therefore you could see that country by yourself, before you carry thither the lady with whom you propose to be united in marriage. You will then be able to form a good judgment how far the removal is likely to be advantageous, and may proceed on surer grounds. England has now acknowledged our independence, and the sovereignty of our government; and several states of Europe, who think a commerce with us may be beneficial to them, are preparing to send ministers to reside near the congress. I think it possible to establish a profitable trade between the kingdoms of Naples and America.

Should your court be of that opinion, and think fit to employ some one to visit our several states, and take information of our productions and wants, the nature of our commerce, &c. &c., perhaps it could not find a fitter person than yourself for such a mission : I would afford you all the assistance in my power towards its due execution ; and by this means your voyage would not only be without expense to you, but might afford you some profit.

With great and sincere esteem, I have the honor to be, sir, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO DAVID BARCLAY, ESQ. LONDON.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, Jan. 8, 1783.

I received yesterday your favor of the 27th past, which I immediately answer, as you desire to know soon my opinion respecting the publication of a certain paper. I see no objection, and leave it entirely to your discretion. I have had several letters from our inestimable friend that would do him honor, as they generally contained some schemes and plans for the public good ; but they were left among my papers in America, and I know not how those have fared in our troubles. If I live to get home, I will send you what I can find ; they may perhaps serve in a second edition of the work, which I am much pleased to hear is undertaken by so good a hand, and that it will have the benefit of your inspection. I thank you for the pamphlet you sent me. It is full of good sense, and I doubt not had great effect, as the sentiments it contains soon after became general. Your friends on both sides the Atlantic may be assured of whatever justice or favor I may be able to procure for them. My veneration for William Penn is not less than

yours; and I have always had great esteem for the body of your people. With great and sincere respect,

I am, dear Sir,

your most obedient

and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. As possibly your wet harvest may have in some places produced a quantity of what is called *grown corn*, I send you enclosed a pamphlet published here on that subject, which may contain some useful hints.

TO \* \* \*.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, March 9, 1783.

I think with you, that the making you pay 23*l*. for our passport is a shameful imposition. Your secretaries had 200 of us, in exchange for as many of theirs indeed, but we had no occasion for a quarter of the number; and those that were wanted we gave away *gratis*. There is no bounds to the avidity of officers in old corrupt governments.

Your reasoning is right, that there is no occasion generally for an express treaty to enable subjects of different states in amity to trade with each other. But in the present case, you know you have acts of parliament forbidding you to trade with us; and our people have acts of congress forbidding all commerce with yours. It does not seem clear that a treaty of peace necessarily repeals these acts. A late act of parliament empowering the king to suspend them, implies that otherwise they would continue in force till repealed, and they are not as yet either repealed or suspended. It is probable, that when it shall be known in America that they are repealed, similar repeals will take place there. Till then I

should imagine English goods landed there may be subject to confiscation. But if your ship only arrives in port, and remains without breaking bulk, till the commerce is legally opened, or a permission to land and store them obtained, I should suppose they would be safe, though I have not the law before me, therefore cannot speak positively. It is probable your parliament will immediately take off the restraint on your part, and considering the act made for that purpose, in the same ship with your goods may facilitate and expedite the taking them off on our part. I enclose a recommendatory letter to our minister for foreign affairs, which I hope, if there should be occasion, may be of service. But no passport from me would secure your goods against the operation of positive laws still remaining in force.

I lament the distraction in your public counsels: it lowers the nation in the general esteem of Europe, and gives a degree of uncertainty and hazard to all proposed connexions with it. I am, with great and sincere esteem, dear sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MRS. HEWSON.\*

(EXTRACT.)

Passy, January 27, 1783.

The departure of my dearest friend,† which I learn from your last letter, greatly affects me. To meet with her once more in this life was one of the principal motives of my proposing to visit England again before my return to America. The last year

\* Widow of the eminent anatomist of the name, and formerly MISS STEVENSON, to whom several of Dr. Franklin's letters on philosophical subjects are addressed.

† Refers to Mrs. Hewson's mother.

carried off my friends Dr. Pringle and Dr. Fothergill, and Lord Kaimes and Lord Le Despencer; this has begun to take away the rest, and strikes the hardest. Thus the ties I had to that country, and indeed to the world in general, are loosened one by one; and I shall soon have no attachment left to make me unwilling to follow.

I intended writing when I sent the eleven books, but lost the time in looking for the first. I wrote with that; and hope it came to hand. I therein asked your counsel about my coming to England: on reflection, I think I can, from my knowledge of your prudence, foresee what it will be; viz. not to come too soon, lest it should seem braving and insulting some who ought to be respected. I shall therefore omit that journey till I am near going to America, and then just step over to take leave of my friends, and spend a few days with you. I purpose bringing Ben\* with me, and perhaps may leave him under your care.

At length we are in peace, God be praised; and long, very long may it continue. All wars are follies, very expensive and very mischievous ones: when will mankind be convinced of this, and agree to settle their differences by arbitration? were they to do it even by the cast of a dye, it would be better than by fighting and destroying each other.

Spring is coming on, when travelling will be delightful. Can you not, when your children are all at school, make a little party and take a trip hither? I have now a large house, delightfully situated, in

\* Benjamin Franklin Bache, a grandson of Dr. Franklin, by his daughter.

which I could accommodate you and two or three friends; and I am but half an hour's drive from Paris.

In looking forward, twenty-five years seem a long period; but in looking back, how short! could you imagine that it is now full a quarter of a century since we were first acquainted? it was in 1757. During the greatest part of the time I lived in the same house with my dear deceased friend your mother; of course you and I saw and conversed with each other much and often. It is to all our honors, that in all that time we never had among us the smallest misunderstanding. Our friendship has been all clear sunshine, without any the least clouds in its hemisphere. Let me conclude by saying to you, what I have had too frequent occasions to say to my other remaining old friends, *the fewer we become, the more let us love one another.* Adieu, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE RIGHT HON. EARL OF BUCHAN.

MY LORD,

Passy, March 17, 1783.

I received the letter your Lordship did me the honor of writing to me, and am obliged by your kind congratulations on the return of peace, which I hope will be lasting.

With regard to the terms on which lands may be acquired in America, and the manner of beginning new settlements on them, I cannot give better information than may be found in a book lately printed in London, under some such title as *Letters from a Pennsylvanian Farmer*, by Hector St. John. The only encouragements we hold out to strangers are, a good climate, fertile soil, wholesome air and water,

plenty of provisions and fuel, good pay for labor, kind neighbors, good laws, liberty, and a hearty welcome: the rest depends on a man's own industry and virtue. Lands are cheap, but they must be bought. All settlements are undertaken at private expense: the public contributes nothing but defence and justice. I should not however expect much emigration from a country so much drained of men as yours\* must have been by the late war; since the more have left it, the more room and the more encouragement remains for those who staid at home. But this you can best judge of; and I have long observed of your people that their sobriety, frugality, industry, and honesty, seldom fail of success in America, and of procuring them a good establishment among us.

I do not recollect the circumstance you are pleased to mention of my having saved a citizen at St. Andrews, by giving a turn to his disorder; and I am curious to know what the disorder was, and what the advice I gave which proved so salutary.† With great regard I have the honor to be, my Lord, your Lordship's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO WM. JONES, ESQ.‡

DEAR FRIEND,

Passy, March 17, 1783.

I duly received your obliging letter of November 15. You will have since learnt how much I was

\* Scotland.

† It was a fever in which the Earl of Buchan, then Lord Cadross, lay sick at St. Andrews; and the advice was, not to blister, according to the old practice and the opinion of the learned Dr. Simson, brother of the celebrated geometrician at Glasgow.

‡ Afterwards Sir William Jones.



then, and have been continually engaged in public affairs; and your goodness will excuse my not having answered sooner. You announced your intended marriage with my much respected friend, Miss Anna Maria, which I assure you gave me great pleasure, as I cannot conceive a match more likely to be happy, from the amiable qualities each of you possess so plentifully. You mention its taking place as soon as a prudent attention to worldly interests would permit. I just now learn from Mr. Hodgson, that you are appointed to an honorable and profitable place in the Indies; so I expect now soon to hear of the wedding, and to receive the profile. With the good bishop's permission, I will join my blessing with his; adding my wishes that you may return from that corrupting country with a great deal of money honestly acquired, and with full as much virtue as you carry out with you.

The engraving of my medal, which you know was projected before the peace, is but just finished. None are yet struck in hard metal, but will be in a few days: in the mean time, having this good opportunity by Mr. Penn, I send you one of the *epreuves*. You will see that I have profited of some of your ideas, and adopted the mottos you were so kind as to furnish.

I am at present quite recovered from my late illness, and flatter myself that I may, in the ensuing year, be able to undertake the trip to England, for the pleasure of seeing once more my dear friends there, among whom the bishop and his family stand foremost in my estimation and affection.

I thank you much for your good wishes respecting me. Mine for your welfare and prosperity are not

less earnest and sincere ; being with great truth, dear sir, your affectionate friend, and most obedient servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. Please to present my respects to the club. I always remember with pleasure the agreeable hours I had the happiness of spending with them.

TO THE LORD BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH (DR. SHIPLEY).

Passy, March 17, 1783.

I received with great pleasure my dear and respected friend's letter of the 5th instant, as it informed me of the welfare of a family I so much esteem and love.

The clamor against the peace in your parliament would almost alarm me for its duration, if I were not of opinion with you, that the attack is rather against the minister. I am confident none of the opposition would have made a better peace for England if they had been in his place ; at least I am sure that Lord Stormont, who seems loudest in railing at it, is not the man that could have mended it. My reasons I will give you when I have what I hope to have, the great happiness of seeing you once more, and conversing with you. They talk much of there being no *reciprocity* in our treaty : they think nothing then of our passing over in silence the atrocities committed by their troops, and demanding no satisfaction for their wanton burnings and devastation of our fair towns and countries. They have heretofore confessed the war to be unjust, and nothing is plainer in reasoning than that the mischiefs done in an unjust war should be repaired. Can Englishmen be so partial to themselves, as to imagine they have a right to

plunder and destroy as much as they please, and then, without satisfying for the injuries they have done, to have peace on equal terms? We were favorable, and did not demand what justice entitled us to. We shall probably be blamed for it by our constituents: and I still think it would be the interest of England voluntarily to offer reparation of those injuries, and effect it as much as may be in her power. But this is an interest she will never see.

Let us now forgive and forget. Let each country seek its advancement in its own internal advantages of arts and agriculture, not in retarding or preventing the prosperity of the other. America will, with God's blessing, become a great and happy country; and England, if she has at length gained wisdom, will have gained something more valuable, and more essential to her prosperity, than all she has lost; and will still be a great and respectable nation. Her great disease at present is the number and enormous salaries and emoluments of office. Avarice and ambition are strong passions, and separately act with great force on the human mind; but when both are united, and may be gratified in the same object, their violence is almost irresistible, and they hurry men headlong into factions and contentions destructive of all good government. As long therefore as these great emoluments subsist, your parliament will be a stormy sea, and your public councils confounded by private interests. But it requires much public spirit and virtue to abolish them; more perhaps than can now be found in a nation so long corrupted.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO SIR JOSEPH BANKS.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, July 27, 1783.

I received your very kind letter by Dr. Blagden, and esteem myself much honored by your friendly remembrance. I have been too much and too closely engaged in public affairs since his being here, to enjoy all the benefit of his conversation you were so good as to intend me. I hope soon to have more leisure, and to spend a part of it in those studies that are much more agreeable to me than political operations.

I join with you most cordially in rejoicing at the return of peace. I hope it will be lasting, and that mankind will at length, as they call themselves reasonable creatures, have reason and sense enough to settle their differences without cutting throats: for in my opinion, *there never was a good war, or a bad peace*. What vast additions to the conveniences and comforts of living might mankind have acquired, if the public money spent in wars had been employed in works of public utility! What an extension of agriculture, even to the tops of our mountains; what rivers rendered navigable, or joined by canals; what bridges, aqueducts, new roads, and other public works, edifices and improvements, rendering England a complete paradise, might not have been obtained by spending those millions in doing good, which in the last war have been spent in doing mischief; in bringing misery into thousands of families, and destroying the lives of so many thousands of working people, who might have performed the useful labor!

I am pleased with the late astronomical discoveries

made by our society.\* Furnished as all Europe now is with academies of science, with nice instruments and the spirit of experiment, the progress of human knowledge will be rapid, and discoveries made, of which we have at present no conception. I begin to be almost sorry I was born so soon, since I cannot have the happiness of knowing what will be known one hundred years hence.

I wish continued success to the labors of the Royal Society, and that you may long adorn their chair; being with the highest esteem,

Dear sir, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

Dr. Blagden will acquaint you with the experiment of a vast globe sent up into the air, much talked of here, and which, if prosecuted, may furnish means of new knowledge.

TO DR. PRICE.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Passy, near Paris, Sept. 16, 1783.

All the conversation here at present turns upon the balloons filled with light inflammable air, and the means of managing them so as to give men the advantage of flying.—One is to be let off on Friday next at Versailles, which it is said will be able to carry up 1000 pounds weight, I know not whether inclusive or exclusive of its own. I have sent an account of the former to Sir Joseph Banks, our president, and shall be glad to hear if the experiment is repeated with success in England. Please to forward to him the enclosed print.

\* THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF LONDON, of which Dr. Franklin was gratuitously and without solicitation elected a Fellow, in consequence of his discoveries in Electricity. See *Memoirs of his Life*. PART II.

Inflammable air puts me in mind of a little jocular paper I wrote some years since in ridicule of a prize question given out by a certain academy on this side the water,\* and I enclose it for your amusement.—On second thoughts, as it is a mathematical question, and perhaps I think it more trifling than it really is, and you are a mathematician, I am afraid I have judged wrong in sending it to you. Our friend, Dr. Priestley, however, who is *apt* to give himself *airs*,† and has a kind of right to every thing his friends *produce* upon that subject, may perhaps like to see it, and you can send it to him without reading it.‡

We have at length signed our preliminary articles as definitive; all the additions we have been so long discussing, being referred to a future treaty of commerce. I have now a little leisure, and long to see and be merry with the club, but doubt I cannot undertake the journey before spring. Adieu, and believe me ever, my dear friend, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. They make small balloons now of the same materials with what is called gold-beaters leaf. Enclosed I send one which, being filled with inflammable air by my grandson, went up last night to the ceiling in my chamber, and remained rolling about there for some time.—Please to give it also to Sir Joseph Banks. If a man should go up with one of the large ones, might there not be some mechanical contrivance to compress the globe at pleasure, and

\* The academy of Brussels.

† i. e. Fixed, deflogisticated air, &c. &c.

‡ This piece is a *plaisanterie* of too *light* a nature for publication.

thereby incline it to descend, and let it expand when he inclines to rise again ?

TO BRAND HOLLIS, ESQ.

SIR,

Passy, near Paris, Oct. 5, 1783.

I received but lately (though sent in June) your most valuable present of the Memoirs of Thomas Hollis, Esq., who was truly, as you describe him in your letter, "a good citizen of the world, and a faithful friend of America." America too is extremely sensible of his benevolence and great beneficence towards her, and will ever revere his memory. These volumes are a proof of what I have sometimes had occasion to say, in encouraging people to undertake different public services; that it is prodigious, the quantity of good that may be done by one man, *if he will make a business of it*. It is equally surprising to think of the very little that is done by many; for such is the general frivolity of the employments and amusements of the rank we call *gentlemen*, that every century may have seen three successions of a set of a thousand each, in every kingdom of Europe, (gentlemen, too, of equal or superior fortune,) no one of which set, in the course of their lives, have done the good effected by this man alone! Good, not only to his own nation, and to his contemporaries, but to distant countries, and to late posterity: for such must be the effect of his multiplying and distributing copies of the works of our best English writers, on subjects the most important to the welfare of society.

I knew him personally but little. I sometimes met with him at the Royal Society, and the Society

of Arts, but he appeared shy of my acquaintance, though he often sent me valuable presents, such as Hamilton's works, Sydney's works, &c. which are now among the most precious ornaments of my library. We might possibly, if we had been more intimate, have concerted some useful operations together; but he loved to do his good alone and secretly; and I find besides, in perusing these memoirs, that I was a doubtful character with him. I do not respect him less for his error; and I am obliged to the editors for the justice they have done me. They have made a little mistake in page 400, where a letter which appeared in a London paper, January 7th, 1768, is said to have been written by Mr. Adams. It was written by me, and is reprinted in Mr. Vaughan's collection of my political pieces, p. 231. This erratum is of no great importance, but may be corrected in a future edition.

I see Mr. Hollis had a collection of curious medals. If he had been still living, I should certainly have sent him one of the medals that I have caused to be struck here. I think the countenance of my *Liberty* would have pleased him. I suppose you possess the collection, and have the same taste. I beg you therefore to accept of one of these medals as a mark of my respect, and believe me to be with sincere esteem, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY JOHN JAY, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, January 6, 1784.

I received your kind letter of the 26th past, and immediately sent that enclosed to Mrs. Jay, whom I saw a few days since with the children, all



perfectly well. It is a happy thing that the little ones are so finely past the small-pox, and I congratulate you upon it most cordially.

It is true, as you have heard, that I have the stone, but not that I have had thoughts of being cut for it. It is as yet very tolerable. It gives me no pain but when in a carriage on the pavement, or when I make some sudden quick movement. If I can prevent its growing larger, which I hope to do by abstemious living and gentle exercise, I can go on pretty comfortably with it to the end of my journey, which can now be at no great distance. I am cheerful, enjoy the company of my friends, sleep well, have sufficient appetite, and my stomach performs well its functions. The latter is very material to the preservation of health. I therefore take no drugs lest I should disorder it. You may judge that my disease is not very grievous, since I am more afraid of the medicines than of the malady.

It gives me pleasure to learn from you that my friends still retain their regard for me. I long to see them again, but I doubt I shall hardly accomplish it. If our commission for the treaty of commerce were arrived, and we were at liberty to treat in England, I might then come over to you, supposing the English ministry disposed to enter into such a treaty.

I have, as you observe, some enemies in England, but they are my enemies as an *American*; I have also two or three in America, who are my enemies as a *minister*; but I thank God there are not in the whole world any who are my enemies as a *man*; for by his grace, through a long life I have been enabled so to conduct myself, that there does not exist a

human being who can justly say, Ben. Franklin has wronged me. This, my friend, is in old age a comfortable reflection. You too have, or may have, your enemies; but let not that render you unhappy. If you make a right use of them, they will do you more good than harm. They point out to us our faults; they put us upon our guard, and help us to live more correctly.

My grandsons are sensible of the honor of your remembrance, and join their respectful compliments and best wishes with those of, dear Sir, your affectionate humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MRS. BACHE.

MY DEAR CHILD,

Passy, Jan. 26, 1784.

Your care in sending me the newspapers is very agreeable to me. I received by Captain Barney those relating to the *Cincinnati*. My opinion of the institution cannot be of much importance: I only wonder that, when the united wisdom of our nation had, in the articles of confederation, manifested their dislike of establishing ranks of nobility, by authority either of the congress or of any particular state, a number of private persons should think proper to distinguish themselves and their posterity from their fellow-citizens, and form an order of *hereditary knights*, in direct opposition to the solemnly-declared sense of their country! I imagine it must be likewise contrary to the good sense of most of those drawn into it, by the persuasion of its projectors, who have been too much struck with the ribbands and crosses they have seen hanging to the button-holes of foreign officers. And I suppose those who disapprove of it have not hitherto given it much

opposition, from a principle somewhat like that of your good mother, relating to punctilious persons, who are always exacting little observances of respect ; that “ *if people can be pleased with small matters, it is a pity but they should have them.*” In this view, perhaps, I should not myself, if my advice had been asked, have objected to their wearing their ribband and badge themselves according to their fancy, though I certainly should to the entailing it as an honor on their posterity. For honor, worthily obtained, (as that for example of our officers) is in its nature a *personal* thing, and incommunicable to any but those who had some share in obtaining it. Thus among the Chinese, the most ancient, and from long experience the wisest of nations, honor does not *descend*, but *ascends*. If a man from his learning, his wisdom, or his valor, is promoted by the emperor to the rank of mandarin, his parents are immediately entitled to all the same ceremonies of respect from the people, that are established as due to the mandarin himself ; on the supposition that it must have been owing to the education, instruction, and good example afforded him by his parents, that he was rendered capable of serving the public. This *ascending* honor is therefore useful to the state, as it encourages parents to give their children a good and virtuous education. But the *descending honor*, to a posterity who could have no share in obtaining it, is not only groundless and absurd, but often hurtful to that posterity, since it is apt to make them proud, disdain-ing to be employed in useful arts, and thence falling into poverty, and all the meannesses, servility, and wretchedness attending it ; which is the present case with much of what is called the *noblesse* in Eu-

rope.\* Or if, to keep up the dignity of the family, estates are entailed entire on the eldest male heir, another pest to industry and improvement of the country is introduced, which will be followed by all the odious mixture of pride and beggary, and idleness, that have half depopulated and decultivated Spain; occasioning continual extinction of families by the discouragements of marriage, and neglect in the improvement of estates. I wish therefore that the Cincinnati, if they must go on with their project, would direct the badges of their order to be worn by their fathers and mothers, instead of handing them down to their children. It would be a good precedent, and might have good effects. It would also be a kind of obedience to the fourth commandment, in which God enjoins us to *honor* our father and mother,

\* The celebrated civilian, Francis Hotoman, who was one of the most learned men of his age, gives us the cause of making hereditary the order of nobility in France. In his work, intitled *Franco-Gallia*, written in the year 1574, he says:—

“We must not omit making mention of the *cunning device* made use of by Hugh Capet, for establishing himself in his new dominion [of king of France *anno* 987]. For whereas all the magistrates and honors of the kingdom, such as dukedoms, earldoms, &c. had been *hitherto* from ancient times conferred upon *select* and *deserving* persons in the general *conventions of the people*, and were held *only during good behaviour*; whereof (as the lawyers express it) they were but *beneficiaries*. Hugh Capet, in order to secure to himself the affections of the great men, was the *first* that made those *honors perpetual*, which were formerly but *temporary*; and ordained that such as obtained them should have an *hereditary* right in them, and might leave them to their children. Of this see Franciscus Cononanus the civilian’s Comment, 11. chap. ix.”

It is singular that this fact has escaped the notice of most of the French historians.

but has nowhere directed us to honor our children. And certainly no mode of honoring those immediate authors of our being can be more effectual, than that of doing praiseworthy actions, which reflect honor on those who gave us our education ; or more becoming, than that of manifesting, by some public expression or token, that it is to their instruction and example we ascribe the merit of those actions.

But the absurdity of *descending honors* is not a mere matter of philosophical opinion, it is capable of mathematical demonstration. A man's son, for instance, is but half of his family, the other half belonging to the family of his wife. His son, too, marrying into another family, his share in the grandson is but a fourth ; in the great grandson, by the same process, it is but an eighth. In the next generation a sixteenth ; the next a thirty-second ; the next a sixty-fourth ; the next an hundred and twenty-eighth ; the next a two hundred and fifty-sixth ; and the next a five hundred and twelfth : thus in nine generations, which will not require more than 300 years, (no very great antiquity for a family) our present Chevalier of the Order of Cincinnatus's share in the then existing knight, will be but a 512th part ; which, allowing the present certain fidelity of American wives to be insured down through all those nine generations, is so small a consideration, that methinks no reasonable man would hazard for the sake of it, the disagreeable consequences of the jealousy, envy and ill-will, of his countrymen.

Let us go back with our calculation from this young noble, the 512th part of the present knight, through his nine generations, till we return to the year of the institution. He must have had a father

and mother, they are two ; each of them had a father and mother, they are four. Those of the next preceding generation will be eight, the next sixteen, the next thirty-two, the next sixty-four, the next one hundred and twenty-eight, the next two hundred and fifty-six, and the ninth in this retrocession five hundred and twelve, who must be now existing, and all contribute their proportion of this future Chevalier de Cincinnatus. These, with the rest, make together as follows:—

	2
	4
	8
	16
	32
	64
	128
	256
	512
	<hr/>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1022</b>

One thousand and twenty-two men and women, contributors to the formation of one knight. And if we are to have a thousand of these future knights, there must be now and hereafter existing one million and twenty-two thousand fathers and mothers, who are to contribute to their production, unless a part of the number are employed in making more knights than one. Let us strike off then the 22,000, on the supposition of this double employ, and then consider whether, after a reasonable estimation of the number of rogues, and fools, and scoundrels, and prostitutes, that are mixed with, and make up necessarily their

million of predecessors, posterity will have much reason to boast of the noble blood of the then existing set of chevaliers of Cincinnatus. The future genealogists too of these chevaliers, in proving the lineal descent of their honor through so many generations (even supposing honor capable in its nature of descending) will only prove the small share of this honor which can be justly claimed by any one of them, since the above simple process in arithmetic makes it quite plain and clear, that in proportion as the antiquity of the family shall augment, the right to the honor of the ancestor will diminish; and a few generations more would reduce it to something so small as to be very near an absolute nullity. I hope, therefore, that the order will drop this part of their project, and content themselves as the knights of the garter, bath, thistle, St. Louis, and other orders of Europe do, with a life enjoyment of their little badge and ribband, and let the distinction die with those who have merited it. This I imagine will give no offence. For my own part, I shall think it a convenience, when I go into a company where there may be faces unknown to me, if I discover, by this badge, the persons who merit some particular expression of my respect; and it will save modest virtue the trouble of calling for our regard, by awkward round-about intimations of having been heretofore employed as officers in the continental service.

The gentleman who made the voyage to France to provide the ribbands and medals, has executed his commission. To me they seem tolerably done; but all such things are criticised. Some find fault with the Latin, as wanting classical elegance and correctness; and since our nine universities were not

able to furnish better Latin, it was pity, they say, that the mottos had not been in English. Others object to the title, as not properly assumable by any but General Washington, and a few others, who served without pay. Others object to the *bald eagle*,\* as looking too much like a *dindon* or turkey. For my own part, I wish the bald eagle had not been chosen as the representative of our country; he is a bird of bad moral character; he does not get his living honestly; you may have seen him perched on some dead tree, where, too lazy to fish for himself, he watches the labor of the fishing hawk; and when that diligent bird has at length taken a fish, and is bearing it to his nest for the support of his mate and young ones, the bald eagle pursues him and takes it from him. With all this injustice he is never in good case, but like those among men who live by sharpening and robbing, he is generally poor, and often very lousy. Besides, he is a rank coward: the little *king-bird*, not bigger than a sparrow, attacks him boldly and drives him out of the district. He is therefore by no means a proper emblem for the brave and honest Cincinnati of America, who have driven all the *king-birds* from our country; though exactly fit for that order of knights which the French call *chevaliers d'industrie*. I am on this account not displeased that the figure is not known as a bald eagle, but looks more like a turkey. For in truth, the turkey is in comparison a much more respectable bird, and withal a true original native of America.

\* The white-headed erne, or bald eagle, (*falco leucocephalus*. LINN.) peculiar to North America; and the emblem adopted by the society of Cincinnati.



Eagles have been found in all countries, but the turkey was peculiar to ours; the first of the species seen in Europe, being brought to France by the Jesuits from Canada, and served up at the wedding table of Charles the Ninth.\* He is besides (though a little vain and silly, 'tis true, but not the worse emblem for that) a bird of courage, and would not hesitate to attack a grenadier of the British guards, who should presume to invade his farm-yard with a *red* coat on.

I shall not enter into the criticisms made upon their Latin. The gallant officers of America may not have the merit of being great scholars, but they undoubtedly merit much as brave soldiers from their country, which should therefore not leave them merely to *fame* for their "*virtutis premium*," which is one of their Latin mottos. Their "*esto perpetua*," another, is an excellent wish, if they meant it for their country; bad, if intended for their order. The states should not only restore to them the *omnia* of their first motto,† which many of them have left and lost, but pay them justly, and reward them generously. They should not be suffered to remain with all their new created chivalry *entirely* in the situation of the gentleman in the story, which their *omnia reliquit* reminds me of. You know every thing makes

\* A learned friend of the editor's has observed to him that this is a mistake, as *turkies* were found in great plenty by Cortes, when he invaded and conquered Mexico before the time of Charles the IXth. — That this, and their being brought to old Spain, is mentioned by Peter Martyr of Angelina, who was secretary to the council of the Indies, established immediately after the discovery of America, and *personally acquainted with Columbus*.

† OMNIA RELIQUIT SERVARE REMPUBLICAM.

me recollect some story. He had built a very fine house, and thereby much impaired his fortune. He had a pride however in showing it to his acquaintance. One of them, after viewing it all, remarked a motto over the door, *ŌIA VANITAS*. What, says he, is the meaning of this *ŌIA*? 'tis a word I don't understand. I will tell you, said the gentleman: I had a mind to have the motto cut on a piece of smooth marble, but there was not room for it between the ornaments, to be put in characters large enough to be read. I therefore made use of a contraction anciently very common in Latin manuscripts, whereby the *m*'s and *n*'s in words are omitted, and the omission noted by a little dash above, which you may see there, so that the word is *omnia*, *OMNIA VANITAS*. O, said his friend, I now comprehend the meaning of your motto, it relates to your edifice; and signifies, that if you have abridged your *omnia*, you have nevertheless left your *vanitas* legible at full length. I am, as ever, your affectionate father,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY HENRY LAURENS, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, Feb. 12, 1784.

I received your favor of the 3rd instant by your son, with the newspapers, for which I thank you. The disorders of that government, whose constitution has been so much praised, are come to a height that threatens some violent convulsion, if not a dissolution; and its physicians do not even seem to guess at the cause of the disease, and therefore prescribe insufficient remedies, such as *place bills, more equal representation, more frequent elections, &c. &c.* In my humble opinion, the malady consists in the

*enormous salaries, emoluments, and patronage* of great offices. *Ambition and avarice* are separately strong passions: when they are united in pursuit of the same object, they are too strong to be governed by common prudence, or influenced by public spirit and love of country; they drive men irresistibly into factions, cabals, dissensions, and violent divisions, always mischievous to public councils, destructive to the peace of society, and sometimes fatal to its existence. As long as the immense profits of these offices subsist, members of the shortest and most equally chosen parliaments will have them in view, and contend for them, and their contentions will have all the same ruinous consequences. To me then there seems to be but one effectual remedy, and that not likely to be adopted by so corrupt a nation; which is, to abolish these profits, and make every place of *honor* a place of *burthen*. By that means the effect of one of the passions above mentioned would be taken away, and something would be added to counteract the other. Thus the number of competitors for great offices would be diminished, and the efforts of those who still would obtain them moderated.

Thank God we have now less connexion with the affairs of these people, and are more at liberty to take care of our own, which I hope we shall manage better.

We have a terrible winter here, such another in this country is not remembered by any man living. The snow has been thick upon the ground ever since Christmas; and the frost constant.

My grandson joins in best compliments to your-

self and Miss Laurens. With sincere esteem and affection I have the honor to be, dear sir, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO W. STRAHAN, ESQ. M. P. KING'S PRINTER,  
LONDON.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, Feb. 16, 1784.

Your arguments persuading me to come once more to England are very powerful. To be sure I long to see again my friends there, whom I love abundantly: but there are difficulties and objections of several kinds, which at present I don't see how to get over.

I lament with you the political disorders England at present labors under. Your papers are full of strange accounts of anarchy and confusion in America, of which we know nothing, while your own affairs are really in a deplorable situation. In my humble opinion, the root of the evil lies not so much in too long, or too unequally chosen parliaments, as in the enormous salaries, emoluments, and patronage of your great officers; and that you will never be at rest till they are all abolished, and every place of *honor* made at the same time, instead of a place of profit, a place of expense and burthen. Ambition and avarice are each of them strong passions, and when they are united in the same persons, and have the same objects in view for their gratification, they are too strong for public spirit and love of country, and are apt to produce the most violent factions and contentions. They should therefore be separated, and made to act one against the other. Those places, to speak in our old style (brother type), may

be good for the CHAPEL, but they are bad for the master, as they create constant quarrels that hinder the business. For example, here are two months that your government has been employed in *getting its form to press*; which is not yet fit to *work on*, every page of it being *squabbled*, and the whole ready to fall into *pye*. The founts too must be very scanty, or strangely *out of sorts*, since your *compositors* cannot find either *upper* or *lower-case letters* sufficient to set the word ADMINISTRATION, but are forced to be continually *turning for them*. However, to return to common (though perhaps too saucy) language, don't despair; you have still one resource left, and that not a bad one, since it may re-unite the empire. We have some remains of affection for you, and shall always be ready to receive and take care of you in case of distress. So if you have not sense and virtue enough to govern yourselves, e'en dissolve your present old crazy constitution and send members to congress.

You will say my *advice* "smells of *Madeira*." You are right. This foolish letter is mere chit-chat *between ourselves*, over the *second bottle*. If, therefore, you show it to any body, (except our indulgent friends, Dagge and Lady Strachan,) I will positively *solles* you. Yours ever most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO HENRY LAURENS, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, March 12, 1784.

I write this in great pain from the gout in both feet; but my young friend your son having informed me that he sets out for London to-morrow, I could not slip the opportunity, as perhaps it is the only

safe one that may occur before your departure for America. I wish mine was as near. I think I have reason to complain that I am so long without an answer from congress to my request of recal. I wish rather to die in my own country than here; and though the upper part of the building appears yet tolerably firm, yet being undermined by the stone and gout united, its fall cannot be far distant. You are so good as to offer me your friendly services. You cannot do me one more acceptable at present than that of forwarding my dismissal. In all other respects as well as that, I shall ever look on your friendship as an honor to me; being with sincere and great esteem, dear sir, &c. &c.

March 13, 1784.

P. S. Having had a tolerable night, I find myself something better this morning. In reading over my letter, I perceive an omission of my thanks for your kind assurances of never forsaking my defence, should there be need. I apprehend that the violent antipathy of a certain person to me may have produced some calumnies, which what you have seen and heard here may enable you to refute. You will thereby exceedingly oblige one, who has lived beyond all other ambition than that of dying with the fair character he has long endeavored to deserve. As to my infallibility, which you do not undertake to maintain, I am too modest myself to claim it, that is, *in general*; though when we come to *particulars*, I, like other people, give it up with difficulty. Steele says, that the difference between the Church of Rome and the Church of England on that point is only this; that the one pretends to be *infallible*, and the other to be *never in the wrong*. In this latter

sense we are most of us church of England men, though few of us confess it, and express it so naturally and frankly as a certain lady here, who said, I don't know how it happens, but I meet with nobody except myself, that is *always* in the right. *Je ne trouve que moi qui a toujours raison.*

My grandson joins me in affectionate respects to you and the young lady: with best wishes for your health and prosperity, yours,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MR. WALTER, PRINTER, LONDON.

SIR,

Passy, April 17, 1784.

I have received a book, for which I understand I am obliged to you, the Introduction to Logography. I have read it with attention, and as far as I understand it, am much pleased with it. I do not perfectly comprehend the arrangement of his cases; but the reduction of the number of pieces by the roots of words, and their different terminations, is extremely ingenious; and I like much the idea of cementing the letters, instead of casting words or syllables, which I formerly attempted and succeeded in, having invented a mould and method by which I could in a few minutes form a matrice and adjust it, of any word in any fount at pleasure, and proceed to cast from it. I send enclosed a specimen of some of my terminations, and would willingly instruct Mr. Johnson in the method if he desired it, but he has a better. He mentions some improvements that have been proposed, but takes no notice of one published here at Paris, in 1776; so I suppose he has neither seen nor heard of it. It is in a quarto pamphlet, intitled, *Nouveau Système Typogra-*

*phique, ou Moyen de diminuer de moitié, dans toutes les Imprimeries de l'Europe, le travail et les frais de Composition, de Correction, et de Distribution, découvert en 1774, par Madame de\*\*\*.* Frustra fit per plura quod potest fieri per pauciora. *A Paris, de l'Imprimerie Royale, MDCCLXXVI.* It is dedicated to the king, who was at the expense of the experiments. Two commissaries were named to examine and render an account of them; they were M. Desmarests, of the Academy of Sciences, and M. Barbou, an eminent printer. Their report concludes thus: "Nous nous contenterons de dire ici que M. de Saint Paul a rempli les engagements qu'il avoit contractés avec le Gouvernement; que ses expériences projetées ont été conduites avec beaucoup de méthode et d'intelligence de sa part; et que par des calculs longs et pénibles, qui sont le fruit d'un grand nombre de combinaisons raisonnées, il en a déduit plusieurs résultats qui méritent d'être proposés aux artistes, et qui nous paroissent propres à éclairer la pratique de l'imprimerie actuelle, et à en abrégér certainement les procédés. Son projet ne peut que gagner aux contradictions qu'il essuiera sans doute, de la part des gens de l'art. A Paris, le 8 Janvier, 1776." The pamphlet consists of sixty-six pages, containing a number of tables of words and parts of words, explanations of those tables, calculations, answers to objections, &c. I will endeavor to get one to send you if you desire it: mine is bound up with others in a volume. It was after seeing this piece that I cast the syllables I send you a sample of. I have not heard that any of the printers here make at present the least use of the invention of Madame de\*\*\*. You will observe that it pretended only to lessen



the work by one-half; Mr. Johnson's method lessens it three-fourths. I should be glad to know with what the letters are cemented. I think cementing better than casting them together, because if one letter happens to be battered, it may be taken away and another cemented in its place. I received no letter with the pamphlet.

I am, sir, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MR. BENJAMIN WEBB.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, April 22, 1784.

I received yours of the 15th instant, and the memorial it enclosed. The account they give of your situation grieves me. I send you herewith a bill for 10 Louis d'ors. I do not pretend to *give* such a sum; I only *lend* it to you. When you shall return to your country with a good character, you cannot fail of getting into some business that will in time enable you to pay all your debts: in that case, when you meet with another honest man in similar distress, you must pay me by lending this sum to him; enjoining him to discharge the debt by a like operation when he shall be able, and shall meet with such another opportunity. I hope it may thus go through many hands before it meets with a knave that will stop its progress. This is a trick of mine for doing a deal of good with a little money. I am not rich enough to afford *much* in good works, and so am obliged to be cunning and make the most of a *little*. With best wishes for the success of your memorial, and your future prosperity, I am, dear sir, your most obedient servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE REV. DOCTOR MATHER, BOSTON.

REV. SIR,

Pammy, May 12, 1784.

I received your kind letter with your excellent advice to the people of the United States, which I read with great pleasure, and hope it will be duly regarded. Such writings, though they may be lightly passed over by many readers, yet if they make a deep impression on one active mind in an hundred, the effects may be considerable. Permit me to mention one little instance which, though it relates to myself, will not be quite uninteresting to you. When I was a boy, I met with a book intitl'd *Essays to do Good*, which I think was written by your father. It had been so little regarded by a former possessor, that several leaves of it were torn out; but the remainder gave me such a turn of thinking as to have an influence on my conduct through life; for I have always set a greater value on the character of a *doer of good* than on any other kind of reputation; and if I have been, as you seem to think, a useful citizen, the public owes the advantage of it to that book. You mention your being in your 78th year; I am in my 79th; we are grown old together. It is now more than sixty years since I left Boston, but I remember well both your father and grandfather, having heard them both in the pulpit, and seen them in their houses. The last time I saw your father was in the beginning of 1724, when I visited him after my first trip to Pennsylvania. He received me in his library, and on my taking leave showed me a shorter way out of the house through a narrow passage, which was crossed by a beam overhead. We were still talking as I withdrew, he accompanying me behind, and I turning partly towards him, when he said

hastily, Stoop, stoop ! I did not understand him till I felt my head hit against the beam. He was a man that never missed any occasion of giving instruction, and upon this he said to me, *You are young, and have the world before you ; stoop as you go through it, and you will miss many hard thumps.* This advice thus beat into my head, has frequently been of use to me, and I often think of it, when I see pride mortified, and misfortunes brought upon people by carrying their heads too high.

I long much to see again my native place, and to lay my bones there. I left it in 1723 ; I visited it in 1733, 1743, 1753, and 1763. In 1773 I was in England ; in 1775 I had a sight of it, but could not enter, it being in possession of the enemy. I did hope to have been there in 1783, but could not obtain my dismissal from this employment here ; and now I fear I shall never have that happiness. My best wishes however attend my dear country. *Esto perpetua.* It is now blest with an excellent constitution ; may it last for ever !

This powerful monarchy continues its friendship for the United States. It is a friendship of the utmost importance to our security, and should be carefully cultivated. Britain has not yet well digested the loss of its dominion over us, and has still at times some flattering hopes of recovering it. Accidents may increase those hopes, and encourage dangerous attempts. A breach between us and France would infallibly bring the English again upon our backs ; and yet we have some wild heads among our countrymen who are endeavoring to weaken that connexion ! Let us preserve our reputation by performing our engagements ; our credit by fulfilling

our contracts ; and friends by gratitude and kindness ; for we know not how soon we may again have occasion for all of them. With great and sincere esteem, I have the honor to be, &c. **B. FRANKLIN.**

TO DR. PERCIVAL.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, July 17, 1784.

I received yesterday by Mr. White your kind letter of May 11th, with the most agreeable present of your new book.\* I read it all before I slept, which is a proof of the good effects your happy manner has of drawing your reader on, by mixing little anecdotes and historical facts with your instructions. Be pleased to accept my grateful acknowledgments for the pleasure it has afforded me.

It is astonishing that the murderous practice of duelling, which you so justly condemn, should continue so long in vogue. Formerly, when duels were used to determine law-suits, from an opinion that Providence would in every instance favor truth and right with victory, they were excusable. At present, they decide nothing. A man says something, which another tells him is a lie. They fight ; but whichever is killed, the point in dispute remains unsettled. To this purpose they have a pleasant little story here. A gentleman in a coffee-house desired another to sit further from him. ‘Why so?’ ‘Because, sir, you stink!’ ‘That is an affront, and you must fight me.’ ‘I will fight you, if you insist upon it ; but I do not see how that will mend the matter. For if you kill me, I shall stink too ; and if I kill you, you will stink, if possible, more than you do at present.’ How can such miserable sinners as we are entertain

\* Moral and Literary Dissertations, second edition.

so much pride, as to conceit that every offence against our imagined honor merits *death*? These petty princes in their own opinion would call that sovereign a tyrant, who should put one of them to death for a little uncivil language, though pointed at his sacred person; yet every one of them makes himself judge in his own cause, condemns the offender without a jury, and undertakes himself to be the executioner. With sincere and great esteem, I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. Our friend, Mr. Vaughan, may perhaps communicate to you some conjectures of mine relating to the cold of last winter, which I sent him in return for the observations on cold of Professor Wilson. If he should, and you think them worthy so much notice, you may show them to your philosophical Society,\* to which I wish all imaginable success. Their rules appear to me excellent.

TO MESS. WEEMS AND GANT, CITIZENS OF THE  
UNITED STATES, LONDON.

GENTLEMEN, Passy, near Paris, July 18, 1784.

On receipt of your letter, acquainting me that the archbishop of Canterbury † would not permit you to be ordained unless you took the oath of allegiance, I applied to a clergyman of my acquaintance for information on the subject of your obtaining ordination here. His opinion was, that it could not be done; and that if it were done, you would be required to

\* The *Philosophical Society of Manchester*, of which Dr. Percival was one of the principal founders and ornaments.

† Dr. Moore.

vow obedience to the archbishop of Paris. I next inquired of the pope's nuncio, whether you might not be ordained by their bishop in America, powers being sent him for that purpose, if he has them not already? The answer was, 'The thing is impossible, unless the gentlemen become Catholics.'

This is an affair of which I know very little, and therefore I may ask questions and propose means that are improper or impracticable. But what is the necessity of your being connected with the church of England? Would it not be as well if you were of the church of Ireland? the religion is the same, though there is a different set of bishops and archbishops. Perhaps if you were to apply to the bishop of Derry,\* who is a man of liberal sentiments, he might give you orders as of that church. If both Britain and Ireland refuse you, (and I am not sure that the bishops of Denmark or Sweden would ordain you, unless you became Lutherans,) what is then to be done? Next to becoming presbyterians, the episcopalian clergy of America, in my humble opinion, cannot do better than to follow the example of the first clergy of Scotland, soon after the conversion of that country to Christianity, who, when their king had built the cathedral of St. Andrews, and requested the king of Northumberland to lend his bishops to ordain one for them, that their clergy might not as heretofore be obliged to go to Northumberland for orders, and their request was refused; they assembled in the cathedral; and the mitre, crozier, and robes of a bishop being laid upon the altar, they, after earnest prayers for direction in

\* Lord Bristol.

their choice, elected one of their own number ; when the king said to him, *Arise, go to the altar, and receive your office at the hand of God.* His brethren led him to the altar, robed him, put the crozier in his hand, and the mitre on his head, and he became the first bishop of Scotland.

If the British islands were sunk in the sea (and the surface of this globe has suffered greater changes), you would probably take some such method as this : and if they persist in denying you ordination, it is the same thing. An hundred years hence, when people are more enlightened, it will be wondered at, that men in America, qualified by their learning and piety to pray for and instruct their neighbors, should not be permitted to do it till they had made a voyage of 6000 miles out and home, to ask leave of a cross old gentleman at Canterbury ; who seems, by your account, to have as little regard for the souls of the people of Maryland, as king William's attorney-general, Seymour, had for those of Virginia. The reverend commissary, Blair, who projected the college of that province, and was in England to solicit benefactions and a charter, relates, that the queen in the king's absence, having ordered Seymour to draw up the charter which was to be given, with 2000*l.* in money, he opposed the grant ; saying, that the nation was engaged in an expensive war, that the money was wanted for better purposes, and he did not see the least occasion for a college in Virginia. Blair represented to him, that its intention was to educate and qualify young men to be ministers of the gospel, much wanted there ; and begged Mr. Attorney would consider that the people of Virginia had souls to be saved as well as the people of

England. *Souls!* (said he) *damn your souls! Make tobacco!* I have the honor to be, gentlemen, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO B. VAUGHAN, ESQ.

DEAR FRIEND,

Passy, July 26, 1784.

I thank you for the information respecting the proceedings of your West India merchants, or rather planters. The restraints, whatever they may be upon our commerce with your islands, will prejudice their inhabitants, I apprehend, more than us. It is wonderful how preposterously the affairs of this world are managed. Naturally one would imagine that the interests of a few particulars should give way to general interest. But particulars manage their affairs with so much more application, industry, and address than the public do theirs, that general interest most commonly gives way to particular. We assemble parliaments and councils to have the benefit of their collected wisdom, but we necessarily have at the same time the inconvenience of their collected passions, prejudices, and private interests. By the help of these, artful men overpower the wisdom, and dupe its possessors; and if we may judge by the acts, decrees, and edicts all the world over for regulating commerce, an assembly of wise men is the greatest fool upon earth.

I am told that the little pamphlet of *Advice to such as would remove to America*, \* is reprinted in London, with my name to it, which I would rather had been omitted; but wish to see a copy when you have an opportunity of sending it.

\* See WRITINGS, Part III. *Miscellanies*, Sec. 2.



Mr. Hartley has long continued here in expectation of instructions for making a treaty of commerce, but they do not come, and I begin to suspect none are intended; though perhaps the delay is only occasioned by the over-great burthen of business at present on the shoulders of your ministers. We do not press the matter, but are content to wait till they can see their interest respecting America more clearly, being certain that we can shift as well as you without a treaty.

The conjectures I sent you concerning the cold of last winter still appear to me probable: the moderate season in Russia and Canada does not weaken them. I think our frost here began about the 24th of December, in America the 12th of January.

Dr. Price's pamphlet of advice to America is a good one, and will do good. You ask "What remedy I have for the growing luxury of my country, which gives so much *offence* to all *English travellers* without exception?" I answer, that I think it exaggerated, and that travellers are no good judges, whether our luxury is growing or diminishing. Our people are hospitable, and have indeed too much pride in displaying upon their tables before strangers the plenty and variety that our country affords. They have the vanity too of sometimes borrowing one another's plate, to entertain more splendidly. Strangers being invited from house to house, and meeting every day with a feast, imagine what they see is the ordinary way of living of all the families where they dine; when perhaps each family lives a week after upon the remains of the dinner given. It is, I own, a folly in our people to give *such offence* to *English travellers*. The first part of the proverb is thereby verified, that

*fools make feasts.* I wish in this case the other were as true, *and wise men eat them.* These travellers might, one would think, find some fault they could more decently reproach us with, than that of our excessive civility to them as strangers.

I have not indeed yet thought of a remedy for luxury: I am not sure that in a great state it is capable of a remedy; nor that the evil is in itself always so great as it is represented. Suppose we include in the definition of luxury all unnecessary expense, and then let us consider whether laws to prevent such expense are possible to be executed in a great country; and whether, if they could be executed, our people generally would be happier, or even richer. Is not the hope of one day being able to purchase and enjoy luxuries a great spur to labor and industry? May not luxury, therefore, produce more than it consumes, if, without such a spur people would be, as they are naturally enough inclined to be, lazy and indolent? To this purpose I remember a circumstance. The skipper of a shallop employed between Cape May and Philadelphia, had done us some small service, for which he refused pay. My wife understanding that he had a daughter, sent her as a present a new-fashioned cap. Three years after, this skipper being at my house with an old farmer of Cape May, his passenger, he mentioned the cap, and how much his daughter had been pleased with it; 'But,' said he, 'it proved a dear cap to our congregation.' 'Howso?' 'When my daughter appeared in it at meeting, it was so much admired, that all the girls resolved to get such caps from Philadelphia; and my wife and I computed that the whole could not have cost less than one hundred pounds.' 'True,' said

the farmer, 'but you do not tell all the story; I think the cap was nevertheless an advantage to us; for it was the first thing that set our girls upon knitting worsted mittens for sale at Philadelphia, that they might have wherewithal to buy caps and ribbands there; and you know that that industry has continued, and is likely to continue and increase to a much greater value, and answer better purposes.' Upon the whole, I was more reconciled to this little piece of luxury, since not only the girls were made happier by having fine caps, but the Philadelphians by the supply of warm mittens.

In our commercial towns upon the sea-coast, fortunes will occasionally be made. Some of those who grow rich will be prudent, live within bounds, and preserve what they have gained for their posterity. Others, fond of showing their wealth, will be extravagant and ruin themselves. Laws cannot prevent this, and perhaps it is not always an evil to the public. A shilling spent idly by a fool may be picked up by a wiser person, who knows better what to do with it: it is therefore not lost. A vain silly fellow builds a fine house, furnishes it richly, lives in it expensively, and in a few years ruins himself; but the masons, carpenters, smiths, and other honest tradesmen, have been by his employ assisted in maintaining and raising their families; the farmer has been paid for his labor and encouraged, and the estate is now in better hands. In some cases, indeed, certain modes of luxury may be a public evil, in the same manner as it is a private one. If there be a nation, for instance, that exports its beef and linen to pay for its importations of claret and porter, while a great part of its people live upon potatoes,

and wear no shirts, wherein does it differ from the sot who lets his family starve, and sells his clothes to buy drink? Our American commerce is, I confess, a little in this way. We sell our victuals to your islands for rum and sugar; the substantial necessities of life for its superfluities. But we have plenty and live well nevertheless; though by being soberer we might be richer. By-the-bye, here is just issued an *arrêt* of council taking off all the duties upon the exportation of brandies, which, it is said, will render them cheaper in America than your rum: in which case there is no doubt but they will be preferred, and we shall be better able to bear your restrictions on our commerce. There are views here by augmenting their settlements, of being able to supply the growing people of America with the sugar that may be wanted there. On the whole, I believe England will get as little by the commercial war she has begun with us as she did by the military. But to return to luxury.

The vast quantity of forest lands we have yet to clear and put in order for cultivation, will for a long time keep the body of our nation laborious and frugal. Forming an opinion of our people and their manners, by what is seen among the inhabitants of the sea-ports, is judging from an improper sample. The people of the trading towns may be rich and luxurious, while the country possesses all the virtues that tend to private happiness and public prosperity. Those towns are not much regarded by the country; they are hardly considered as an essential part of the states. And the experience of the last war has shown, that their being in possession of the enemy did not necessarily draw on the subjection of the

country, which bravely continued to maintain its freedom and independence notwithstanding.

It has been computed by some political arithmetician, that if every man and woman would work four hours each day in something useful, that labor would produce sufficient to procure all the necessaries and comforts of life; want and misery would be banished out of the world, and the rest of the twenty-four hours might be leisure and pleasure.

What then occasions so much want and misery? It is the employment of men and women in works that produce neither the necessaries nor conveniences of life; who with those who do nothing, consume the necessaries raised by the laborious. To explain this :

The first elements of wealth are obtained by labor from the earth and waters. I have land, and raise corn; with this I feed a family that does nothing: my corn will be consumed; and at the end of the year I shall be no richer than I was at the beginning. But if, while I feed them, I employ them, some in spinning, others in hewing timber and sawing boards, others in making bricks, &c. for building, the value of my corn will be arrested, and remain with me, and at the end of the year we may all be better clothed and better lodged. And if, instead of employing a man I feed in making bricks, I employ him in fiddling for me, the corn he eats is gone, and no part of his manufacture remains to augment the wealth and the conveniences of the family; I shall therefore be the poorer for this fiddling man, unless the rest of my family work more or eat less to make up the deficiency he occasions.

Look round the world and see the millions employed

in doing nothing, or in something that amounts to nothing, when the necessities and conveniences of life are in question. What is the bulk of commerce for which we fight and destroy each other, but the toil of millions for superfluities, to the great hazard and loss of many lives by the constant dangers of the sea? How much labor spent in building and fitting great ships to go to China and Arabia for tea and for coffee, to the West Indies for sugar, to America for tobacco! These things cannot be called the necessities of life, for our ancestors lived very comfortably without them.

A question may be asked ; could all these people now employed in raising, making, or carrying superfluities, be subsisted by raising necessities? I think they might. The world is large, and a great part of it still uncultivated. Many hundred millions of acres in Asia, Africa, and America, are still forest, and a great deal even in Europe. On 100 acres of this forest a man might become a substantial farmer, and 100,000 men employed in clearing each his 100 acres, (instead of being, as they are, French hair-dressers,) would hardly brighten a spot big enough to be visible from the moon, (unless with Herschell's telescope,) so vast are the regions still in the world unimproved.

'Tis however some comfort to reflect, that upon the whole the quantity of industry and prudence among mankind exceeds the quantity of idleness and folly. Hence the increase of good buildings, farms cultivated, and populous cities filled with wealth all over Europe, which a few ages since were only to be found on the coasts of the Mediterranean. And this notwithstanding the mad wars continually raging,

by which are often destroyed in one year the works of many years' peace. So that we may hope the luxury of a few merchants on the sea-coast will not be the ruin of America.

One reflection more, and I will end this long rambling letter. Almost all the parts of our bodies require some expense. The feet demand shoes, the legs stockings, the rest of the body clothing, and the belly a good deal of victuals. *Our* eyes, though exceedingly useful, ask when reasonable only the cheap assistance of *spectacles*, which could not much impair our finances. But *THE EYES OF OTHER PEOPLE* are the eyes that ruin us. If all but myself were blind, I should want neither fine clothes, fine houses, nor fine furniture. Adieu, my dear friend. I am yours ever,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO DR. PRICE.

DEAR FRIEND,

Passy, August 16, 1784.

The commencement here of the art of flying will, as you observe, be a new epoch. The construction and manner of filling the balloons improves daily. Some of the artists have lately gone to England. It will be well for your philosophers to obtain from them what they know, or you will be behind hand; which in mechanic operations is unusual for Englishmen.

I hope the disagreements in our Royal Society are composed: quarrels often disgrace both sides; and disputes even on small matters often produce quarrels for want of knowing how to differ decently; an art which, 'tis said, scarce any body possesses but yourself and Dr. Priestley.

I had indeed thoughts of visiting England once more, and of enjoying the great pleasure of seeing

again my friends there ; but my malady, otherwise tolerable, is I find irritated by the motion in a carriage, and I fear the consequence of such a journey ; yet I am not quite resolved against it. I often think of the agreeable evenings I used to pass with that excellent collection of good men, the club at the London, and wish to be again among them. Perhaps I may pop in some Thursday evening when they least expect me. You may well believe it very pleasing to me to have Dr. Priestley associated with me among the foreign members of the Academy of Sciences. I had mentioned him upon every vacancy that has happened since my residence here, and the place has never been bestowed more worthily.

When you wrote the letter I am now answering, your nation was involved in the confusion of your new election. When I think of your present crazy constitution and its diseases, I imagine the enormous emoluments of place to be among the greatest, and while they exist I doubt whether ever the reform of your representation will cure the evils constantly arising from your perpetual factions. As it seems to be a settled point at present that the minister must govern the parliament, who are to do every thing he would have done ; and he is to bribe them to do this, and the people are to furnish the money to pay these bribes. The parliament appears to me a very expensive machine for government ; and I apprehend the people will find out in time, that they may as well be governed, and that it will be much cheaper to be governed, by the minister alone ; no parliament being preferable to the present.

Your newspapers are full of fictitious accounts of distractions in America. We know nothing of them.



Mr. Jefferson, just arrived here, after a journey through all the states from Virginia to Boston, assures me that all is quiet, a general tranquillity reigns, and the people well satisfied with their present forms of government, a few insignificant persons only excepted. These accounts are I suppose intended as consolatory, and to discourage emigrations. I think with you, that our revolution is an important event for the advantage of mankind in general. It is to be hoped that the lights we enjoy, which the ancient governments in their first establishment could not have, may preserve us from their errors. In this the advice of wise friends may do much good, and I am sure that which you have been so kind as to offer us will be of great service.

Many thanks for your kind wishes respecting my health and happiness, which I return fourfold; being ever, with the sincerest esteem, my dear friend, your most affectionate

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE RIGHT HON. LORD VISCOUNT HOWE.

MY LORD,

Passy, August 18, 1784.

I received lately the very valuable voyage of the late Capt. Cook, kindly sent to me by your lordship, in consideration of my good-will in issuing orders towards the protection of that illustrious discoverer from any interruption in his return home by American cruisers. The reward vastly exceeds the small merit of the action, which was no more than a duty to mankind. I am very sensible of his majesty's goodness in permitting this favor to me, and I desire that my thankful acknowledgments may be accepted. With great respect, I am, my lord, your lordship's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO WILLIAM STRAHAN, ESQ. KING'S PRINTER,  
LONDON.

DEAR FRIEND,

Passy, August 19, 1784.

You press me much to come to England. I am not without strong inducements to do so; the fund of knowledge you promise to communicate to me is an addition to them, and no small one. At present it is impracticable. But when my grandson returns, come with him. We will talk the matter over, and perhaps you may take me back with you. I have a bed at your service, and will try to make your residence, while you can stay with us, as agreeable to you, if possible, as I am sure it will be to me.

You do not "approve the annihilation of profitable places; for you do not see why a statesman who does his business well, should not be paid for his labor as well as any other workman." Agreed. But why more than any other workman? The less the salary the greater the honor. In so great a nation there are many rich enough to afford giving their time to the public; and there are, I make no doubt, many wise and able men who would take as much pleasure in governing for nothing, as they do in playing chess for nothing. It would be one of the noblest amusements. That this opinion is not chimerical, the country I now live in affords a proof; its whole civil and criminal law administration being done for nothing, or in some sense for less than nothing, since the members of its judiciary parliaments buy their places, and do not make more than *three per cent.* for their money, by their fees and emoluments, while the legal interest is *five*; so that in fact they give two per cent. to be allowed to govern, and all their time and trouble into the bargain. Thus *profit*,

one motive for desiring place, being abolished, there remains only *ambition*; and that being in some degree balanced by *loss*, you may easily conceive that there will not be very violent factions and contentions for such places; nor much of the mischief to the country that attends your factions, which have often occasioned wars, and overloaded you with debts im-payable.

I allow you all the force of your joke upon the vagrancy of our congress. They have a right to sit *where* they please, of which perhaps they have made too much use by shifting too often. But they have two other rights; those of sitting *when* they please, and as *long* as they please, in which methinks they have the advantage of your parliament; for they cannot be dissolved by the breath of a minister, or sent packing as you were the other day, when it was your earnest desire to have remained longer together.

You “fairly acknowledge that the late war terminated quite contrary to your expectation.” Your expectation was ill-founded; for you would not believe your old friend, who told you repeatedly that by those measures England would lose her colonies, as Epictetus warned in vain his master that he would break his leg. You believed rather the tales you heard of our poltroonery and impotence of body and mind. Do you not remember the story you told me of the Scotch serjeant who met with a party of forty American soldiers, and, though alone, disarmed them all, and brought them in prisoners? a story almost as improbable as that of the Irishman, who pretended to have alone taken and brought in five of the enemy by *surrounding* them. And yet, my friend, sensible and judicious as you are, but partaking of the general

infatuation, you seemed to believe it. The word *general* puts me in mind of a general, your General Clarke, who had the folly to say in my hearing at Sir John Pringle's, that with a thousand British grenadiers he would undertake to go from one end of America to the other, and geld all the males, partly by force and partly by a little coaxing. It is plain he took us for a species of animals very little superior to brutes. The parliament too believed the stories of another foolish general, I forget his name, that the Yankees never *felt bold*. Yankey was understood to be a sort of Yahoo, and the parliament did not think the petitions of such creatures were fit to be received and read in so wise an assembly. What was the consequence of this monstrous pride and insolence? You first sent small armies to subdue us, believing them more than sufficient, but soon found yourselves obliged to send greater; these, whenever they ventured to penetrate our country beyond the protection of their ships, were either repulsed, and obliged to scamper out, or were surrounded, beaten, and taken prisoners. An American planter who had never seen Europe, was chosen by us to command our troops, and continued during the whole war. This man sent home to you, one after another, five of your best generals baffled, their heads bare of laurels, disgraced even in the opinion of their employers. Your contempt of our understandings in comparison with your own, appeared to be not much better founded than that of our courage, if we may judge by this circumstance, that in whatever court of Europe a Yankey negociator appeared, the wise British minister was routed, put in a passion, picked a quarrel with your friends, and was sent home with a flea in his ear,

But after all, my dear friend, do not imagine that I am vain enough to ascribe our success to any superiority in any of those points. I am too well acquainted with all the springs and levers of our machine, not to see, that our human means were unequal to our undertaking, and that if it had not been for the justice of our cause, and the consequent interposition of Providence, in which we had faith, we must have been ruined. If I had ever before been an atheist, I should now have been convinced of the being and government of a Deity! It is he who abases the proud and favors the humble. May we never forget his goodness to us, and may our future conduct manifest our gratitude!

But let us leave these serious reflections, and converse with our usual pleasantry. I remember your observing once to me, as we sat together in the house of commons, that no two journeymen printers within your knowledge had met with such success in the world as ourselves. You were then at the head of your profession, and soon afterwards became a member of parliament. I was an agent for a few provinces, and now act for them all. But we have risen by different modes. I, as a republican printer, always liked a form well *planed down*; being averse to those *overbearing* letters that hold their heads so *high* as to hinder their neighbors from appearing. You, as a monarchist, chose to work upon *crown* paper, and found it profitable; while I worked upon *pro patria* (often indeed called *fools-cap*) with no less advantage. Both our *heaps* *hold out* very well, and we seem likely to make a pretty good day's work of it. With regard to public affairs, (to continue in the same style) it seems to me that the compositors in

your chapel do not *cast off their copy* well, nor perfectly understand *imposing*: their *forms* too are constantly pestered by the *outs*, and *doubles*, that are not easy to be corrected. And I think they were wrong in laying aside some *faces*, and particularly some *head-pieces*, that would have been both useful and ornamental. But, courage! The business may still flourish with good management; and the master become as rich as any of the company.

By the way, the rapid growth and extension of the English language in America must become greatly advantageous to the booksellers, and holders of copyrights in England. A vast audience is assembling there for English authors, ancient, present, and future, our people doubling every twenty years; and this will demand large and of course profitable impressions of your most valuable books. I would, therefore, if I possessed such rights, entail them, if such a thing be practicable, upon my posterity; for their worth will be continually augmenting. This may look a little like advice, and yet I have drank no *Madeira* these six months. The subject, however, leads me to another thought, which is, that you do wrong to discourage the emigration of Englishmen to America. In my piece on population, I have proved, I think, that emigration does not diminish, but multiplies a nation. You will not have fewer at home for those that go abroad; and as every man who comes among us, and takes up a piece of land, becomes a citizen, and by our constitution has a voice in elections, and a share in the government of the country, why should you be against acquiring by this fair means, a repossession of it, and leave it to be taken by foreigners of all nations and languages,

who by their numbers may drown and stifle the English, which otherwise would probably become in the course of two centuries the most extensive language in the world, the Spanish only excepted? It is a fact, that the Irish emigrants and their children are now in possession of the government of Pennsylvania, by their majority in the assembly, as well as of a great part of the territory; and I remember well the first ship that brought any of them over. I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO GEORGE WHEATLEY, ESQ. TREASURER OF THE  
FOUNDLING HOSPITAL, LONDON.

Passy, near Paris, Aug. 21, 1784.

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,

I received your kind letter of May 3, 1783. I am ashamed that it has been so long unanswered. The indolence of old age, frequent indisposition, and too much business, are my only excuses. I had great pleasure in reading it, as it informed me of your welfare.

Your excellent little work, *the Principles of Trade*, is too little known. I wish you would send me a copy of it by the return of my grandson and secretary, whom I beg leave to recommend to your civilities. I would get it translated and printed here. And if your bookseller has any quantity of them left, I should be glad he would send them to America. The ideas of our people there, though rather better than those that prevail in Europe, are not so good as they should be; and that piece might be of service among them.

I am sorry your favorite charity\* does not go on as you could wish it. It is shrunk indeed by your admitting only 60 children in a year. What you have told your brethren respecting America is true. If you find it difficult to dispose of your children in England, it looks as if you had too many people. And yet you are afraid of emigration. A subscription is lately set on foot here to encourage and assist mothers in nursing their infants themselves at home; the practice of sending them to the *Enfants trouvés* having risen here to a monstrous excess, as by the annual bill it appears they amount to near one-third of the children born in Paris! The subscription is likely to succeed, and may do a great deal of good, though it cannot answer all the purposes of a Foundling Hospital.

Your eyes must continue very good, since you can write so small a hand without spectacles. I cannot distinguish a letter even of large print; but am happy in the invention of double spectacles,† which, serving for distant objects as well as near ones, make my eyes as useful to me as ever they were. If all the other defects and infirmities were as easily and cheaply remedied, it would be worth while for friends to live a good deal longer; but I look upon death to be as necessary to our constitution as sleep. We shall rise refreshed in the morning. Adieu, and believe me ever yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

\* The Foundling Hospital.

† See a particular description of the same in letter to George Wheatley, Esq. May 23, 1785.



TO \*\*\*\*.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, August 21, 1784.

Understanding that my letter intended for you by General Melvill was lost at the Hotel d'Espagne, I take this opportunity, by my grandson, to give you the purport of it, as well as I can recollect. I thanked you for the pleasure you had procured me of the general's conversation, whom I found a judicious, sensible, and amiable man. I was glad to hear that you possessed a comfortable retirement, and more so that you had thoughts of removing to Philadelphia, for that it would make me very happy to have you there. Your *companions* would be very acceptable to the library, but I hoped you would long live to enjoy their company yourself. I agreed with you in sentiments concerning the Old Testament, and thought the clause in our constitutions which required the members of assembly to declare their belief, *that the whole of it was given by divine inspiration*, had better have been omitted. That I had opposed the clause; but being overpowered by numbers, and fearing more might in future times be grafted on it, I prevailed to have the additional clause, "*that no further or more extended profession of faith should ever be exacted.*" I observed to you too, that the evil of it was the less, as *no inhabitant*, nor any officer of government, except the members of assembly, was obliged to make that declaration. So much for that letter: to which I may now add, that there are several things in the Old Testament impossible to be given by *divine* inspiration; such as the approbation ascribed to the angel of the

\* Supposed to Dr. Priestley.

Lord, of that abominably wicked and detestable action of Jael, the wife of Heber, the Kenite.\* If the rest of the books were like that, I should rather suppose it given by inspiration from another quarter, and renounce the whole.

By the way, how goes on the Unitarian church in Essex Street? and the honest minister of it,† is he comfortably supported? your old colleague Mr. Radcliff,‡ is he living? and what became of Mr. Denham?

I jog on still, with as much health, and as few of the infirmities of old age as I have any reason to expect. But notwithstanding the decay of my constitution, my regard for my old friends remains firm and entire. You will always have a good share of it; for I am ever, with great and sincere esteem, dear sir, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO B. VAUGHAN, ESQ.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Passy, Sept. 7, 1784.

This will be delivered to you by Count Mira-beau;§ son of the Marquis of that name, author of *L'Ami des Hommes*. This gentleman is esteemed here, and I recommend him to your civilities and counsels, particularly with respect to the printing of a piece he has written on the subject of *hereditary nobility*, on occasion of the order of Cincinnati lately attempted to be established in America, which cannot be printed here. I find that some of the best judges think it

\* Judges, chap. iv.

† Theophilus Lindsey, M. A.

‡ A dissenting minister at Wapping, who afterwards turned to the profession of the law. He published one or two sermons.

§ The same who afterwards so eminently distinguished himself by his eloquence in the early part of the French revolution.

extremely well written, with great clearness, force, and elegance. If you can recommend him to an honest, reasonable bookseller, that will undertake it, you will do him much service, and perhaps some to mankind, who are too much bigoted in many countries to that kind of imposition. I had formerly almost resolved to trouble you with no more letters of recommendation; but I think you will find this gentleman to possess talents that may render his acquaintance agreeable. With sincere esteem, I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO B. VAUGHAN, ESQ.

DEAR FRIEND,

Passy, April 21, 1785.

We see much in parliamentary proceedings, and in papers and pamphlets, of the injury the concessions to Ireland will do to the *manufacturers* of England, while the *people* of England seem to be forgotten, as if quite out of the question. If the Irish can manufacture cottons, and stuffs, and silks, and linens, and cutlery, and toys, and books, &c. &c. &c. so as to sell them cheaper in England than the *manufacturers* of England sell them, is not this good for the *people* of England, who are not manufacturers? And will not even the manufacturers themselves share the benefit; since if cottons are cheaper, all the other manufacturers who wear cottons will save in that article; and so of the rest? If books can be had much cheaper from Ireland, (which I believe, for I bought Blackstone there for 24s. when it was sold in England at four guineas,) is not this an advantage, not to English booksellers indeed, but to English readers, and to learning? And of all the complainants, perhaps these booksellers

are least worthy of consideration. The catalogue you last sent me amazes me by the high prices (said to be the lowest) affixed to each article. And one can scarce see a new book, without observing the excessive artifices made use of to puff up a paper of verses into a pamphlet, a pamphlet into an octavo, and an octavo into a quarto, with scab-boardings, white-lines, sparse titles of chapters, and exorbitant margins, to such a degree, that the selling of paper seems now the object, and printing on it only the pretence. I enclose the copy of a page in a late comedy. Between every two lines there is a white space equal to another line. You have a law, I think, against butchers blowing of veal to make it look fatter; why not one against booksellers blowing of books to make them look bigger? All this *to yourself*; you can easily guess the reason.

My grandson is a little indisposed, but sends you two pamphlets, *Figaro*, and *Le Roi Voyageur*. The first is a play of Beaumarchais, which has had a great run here. The other a representation of all the supposed errors of Government in this country, some of which are probably exaggerated. It is not publicly sold; we shall send some more shortly.

Please to remember me very respectfully and affectionately to good Dr. Price. I am glad that he has printed a translation of the Testament: it may do good. I am ever, my dear friend, yours most sincerely,

B. FRANKLIN.

FROM DR. FRANKLIN TO AN ENGRAVER IN PARIS.

Passy, ———

En relisant, Monsieur, le prospectus de votre estampe, je vois que vous m'attribuez toujours en entier le mérite d'avoir affranchi l'Amérique. J'ai

cependant eu l'honneur de vous dire, dans notre première conversation, que je ne pouvois y consentir sans me rendre coupable d'injustice envers tant d'hommes sages et courageux qui n'ont pas craint de hasarder leur fortune et leur vie pour le succès de cette entreprise ; je vous proposai donc, et je persiste dans la même pensée, de substituer à mon nom dans l'explication de l'estampe, ces mots : "*Le congrès représenté par un sénateur habillé à la romaine,*" &c.

Je ne puis non plus, Monsieur, en accepter la dédicace : je ne veux point que la France, et mon pays, me croient assez présomptueux pour convenir que je mérite des louanges aussi excessives ; et vous concevez qu'il me siéroit mal d'appuyer de ma recommandation le débit d'un ouvrage qui les contiendrait. D'après ces considérations je vous prie de vouloir bien changer votre explication dans un nouveau prospectus, et de dédier votre estampe au congrès. J'ai l'honneur d'être, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO DR. INGENHAUSZ.

Passy, April 29, 1785.

I thank you much for the postscript respecting my disorder, the stone. I have taken heretofore, and am now again taking the remedy you mention, which is called *Blackrie's Solvent*. It is the soap lie, with lime water, and I believe it may have some effect in diminishing the symptoms, and preventing the growth of the stone, which is all I expect from it. It does not hurt my appetite : I sleep well, and enjoy my friends in cheerful conversation as usual. But as I cannot use much exercise, I eat more sparingly than formerly, and I drink no wine.

I admire that you should be so timid in asking

leave of your good imperial master, to make a journey for visiting a friend. I am persuaded you would succeed, and I hope the proposition I have repeated to you in this letter will assist your courage, and enable you to ask and obtain. If you come hither soon, you may, when present, get your book finished, and be ready to proceed with me to America. While writing this, I have received from congress my leave to return; and I believe I shall be ready to embark by the middle of July at farthest. I shall now be free from politics for the rest of my life. Welcome again, my dear philosophical amusements!

I see by a full page of your letter, you have been possessed with strange ideas of America; that there is no justice to be obtained there, no recovery of debts, projects of insurrection to overturn the present government, &c. &c.; that a Virginia colonel, nephew of the governor, had cheated a stranger of 100,000 livres, and that somebody was imprisoned for only speaking of it, and the like very improbable stories; they are all fictions or misrepresentations. If they were truths, all strangers would avoid such a country, and foreign merchants would as soon carry their goods to sell in Newgate as America. Think a little on the sums England has spent to preserve a monopoly of the trade of that people, with whom they had long been acquainted, and of the desire all Europe is now manifesting to obtain a share of that trade. Our ports are full of their ships, their merchants buying and selling in our streets continually, and returning with our products. Would this happen? Could such commerce be continued with us, if we were such a collection of scoundrels and villains as we have been represented to you? And insurrections

against our rulers are not only unlikely, as the rulers are the choice of the people, but unnecessary; as, if not liked, they may be changed annually by the new elections. I own you have cause, great cause to complain of \*\*\*\*\*, but you are wrong to condemn a whole country by a single sample. I have seen many countries, and I do not know a country in the world in which justice is so well administered, where protection and favor have so little power to impede its operations, and where debts are recovered with so much facility. If I thought it such a country as it has been painted to you, I should certainly never return to it. The truth, I believe, is, that more goods have been carried thither from all parts of Europe, than the consumption of the country requires, and it is natural that some of the adventurers are willing to discourage others from following them, lest the prices should still be kept down by the arrival of fresh cargoes; and it is not unlikely that some negligent or unfaithful factors sent thither, may have given such accounts, to excuse their not making remittances. And the English magnify all this, and spread it abroad in their papers, to dissuade foreigners from attempting to interfere with them in their commerce with us.

Your account of the emperor's condescending conversation with you concerning me, is pleasing. I respect very much the character of that monarch, and think, that if I were one of his subjects, he would find me a good one. I am glad that his difference with your country is likely to be accommodated without bloodshed. The *Courier de l'Europe*, and some other papers, printed a letter on that difference, which they ascribed to me. Be assured, my friend, that I never wrote it, nor was ever presump-

tuous enough to meddle with an affair so much out of my way. Yours, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

TO JONATHAN WILLIAMS, ESQ.

(EXTRACT.)

Passy, May 19, 1785.

"The conversations you mention respecting America are suitable. Those people speak what they wish; but she was certainly never in a more happy situation. They are angry with us, and speak all manner of evil of us; but we flourish notwithstanding. They put me in mind of a violent high-church factor, resident in Boston, when I was a boy. He had bought upon speculation a Connecticut cargo of onions, which he flattered himself he might sell again to great profit; but the price fell, and they lay upon hand. He was heartily vexed with his bargain, especially when he observed they began to *grow* in the store he had filled with them. He showed them one day to a friend. "Here they are," said he, "and they are *growing* too! I damn them every day; but I think they are like the Presbyterians; the more I curse them, the more they grow." Yours,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO GEORGE WHEATLEY, ESQ.

DEAR OLD FRIEND,

Passy, May 23, 1785.

I sent you a few lines the other day, with my medallion, when I should have written more, but was prevented by the coming in of a *bavard*, who worried me till evening. I bore with him, and now you are to bear with me; for I shall probably *bavarder* in answering your letter.

I am not acquainted with the saying of Alphonsus, which you allude to as a sanctification of your rigidity in refusing to allow me the plea of old age as



an excuse for my want of exactness in correspondence. What was that saying? You do not, it seems, feel any occasion for such an excuse, though you are, as you say, rising seventy-five. But I am rising (perhaps more properly falling) eighty, and I leave the excuse with you until you arrive at that age; perhaps you may then be more sensible of its validity, and see fit to use it for yourself.

I must agree with you that the gout is bad, and that the stone is worse. I am happy in not having them both together; and I join in your prayer, that you may live till you die without either. But I doubt the author of the epitaph you send me was a little mistaken, when he, speaking of the world, says, that

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he ne'er cared a pin  
What they said, or may say, of the mortal within.

It is so natural to wish to be well spoken of, whether alive or dead, that I imagine he could not be quite exempt from that desire; and that at least he wished to be thought a wit, or he would not have given himself the trouble of writing so good an epitaph to leave behind him. Was it not as worthy of his care that the world should say he was an honest and a good man? I like better the concluding sentiment in the old song called the *Old Man's Wish*, wherein, after wishing for a warm house in a country town, an easy horse, some good authors, ingenious and cheerful companions, a pudding on Sundays, with stout ale, and a bottle of Burgundy, &c. &c. in separate stanzas, each ending with this burthen,

May I govern my passions with absolute sway,  
Grow wiser and better as my strength wears away,  
Without gout or stone, by a gentle decay.

He adds,

With a courage undaunted may I face my last day;  
And when I am gone, may the better sort say,—  
In the morning when sober, in the evening when mellow,—  
He's gone, and has not left behind him his fellow.  
For he governed his passions, &c.

But what signifies our wishing? Things happen, after all, as they will happen. I have sung that *wishing song* a thousand times when I was young, and now find at four-score that the three contraries have befallen me, being subject to the gout and the stone, and not being yet master of all my passions. Like the proud girl in my country, who wished and resolved not to marry a parson, nor a Presbyterian, nor an Irishman; and at length found herself married to an Irish Presbyterian parson. You see I have some reason to wish, that in a future state I may not only be *as well as I was*, but a little better. And I hope it: for I too, with your poet, *trust in God*. And when I observe that there is great frugality, as well as wisdom, in his works, since he has been evidently sparing both of labor and materials; for, by the various wonderful inventions of propagation, he has provided for the continual peopling his world with plants and animals, without being at the trouble of repeated new creations; and by the natural reduction of compound substances to their original elements, capable of being employed in new compositions, he has prevented the necessity of creating new matter; so that the earth, water, air, and perhaps fire, which being compounded from wood, do, when the wood is dissolved, return, and again become air, earth, fire, and water; I say, that when I see nothing annihilated, and not even a drop of

water wasted, I cannot suspect the annihilation of souls, or believe that he will suffer the daily waste of millions of minds ready made that now exist, and put himself to the continual trouble of making new ones. Thus finding myself to exist in the world, I believe I shall, in some shape or other, always exist; and, with all the inconveniences human life is liable to, I shall not object to a new edition of mine; hoping, however, that the *errata* of the last may be corrected.

I return your note of children received in the Foundling Hospital at Paris, from 1741 to 1755 inclusive; and I have added the years succeeding down to 1770. Those since that period I have not been able to obtain. I have noted in the margin the gradual increase, viz. from every tenth child so thrown upon the public, until it comes to every third. Fifteen years have passed away since the last account, and probably it may now amount to one half. Is it right to encourage this monstrous deficiency of natural affection? A surgeon I met with here, excused the women of Paris, by saying seriously, that they *could not* give suck; “*Car,*” said he, “*elles n’ont point de tetons.*” He assured me it was a fact, and bade me look at them, and observe how flat they were on the breast; “they have nothing more there,” said he, “than I have upon the back of my hand.” I have since thought that there might be some truth in his observation, and that possibly nature, finding they made no use of bobbies, has left off giving them any. Yet, since Rousseau pleaded with admirable eloquence for the rights of children to their mother’s milk, the mode has changed a little; and

some ladies of quality now suckle their infants and find milk enough. May the mode descend to the lower ranks, till it becomes no longer the custom to pack their infants away as soon as born, to the *enfants trouvés*, with the careless observation, that the king is better able to maintain them. I am credibly informed that nine-tenths of them die there pretty soon, which is said to be a great relief to the institution, whose funds would not otherwise be sufficient to bring up the remainder. Except the few persons of quality above mentioned, and the multitude who send to the hospital, the practice is to hire nurses in the country to carry out the children, and take care of them there. Here is an office for examining the health of nurses, and giving them licences. They come to town on certain days of the week in companies, to receive the children, and we often meet trains of them on the road returning to the neighboring villages, with each a child in arms. But those who are good enough to try this way of raising their children, are often not able to pay the expense, so that the prisons of Paris are crowded with wretched fathers and mothers confined *pour mois de nourrice*, though it is laudably a favorite charity to pay for them, and set such prisoners at liberty. I wish success to the new project of assisting the poor to keep their children at home, because I think there is no nurse like a mother, (or not many) and that if parents did not immediately send their infants out of their sight, they would in a few days begin to love them, and thence be spurred to greater industry for their maintenance. This is a subject you understand better than I, and therefore having per-

haps said too much, I drop it. I only add to the notes a remark from the History of the Academy of Sciences, much in favor of the Foundling Institution.

The Philadelphia bank goes on, as I hear, very well. What you call the Cincinnati Institution, is no institution of our government, but a private convention among the officers of our late army, and so universally disliked by the people, that it is supposed it will be dropped. It was considered as an attempt to establish something like an hereditary rank or nobility. I hold with you that it was wrong; may I add, that all *descending* honors are wrong and absurd; that the honors of virtuous actions appertain only to him that performs them, and is in its nature incommunicable. If it were communicable by descent, it must also be divisible among the descendants; and the more ancient the family, the less would be found existing in any one branch of it; to say nothing of the greater chance of unlucky interruptions.\*

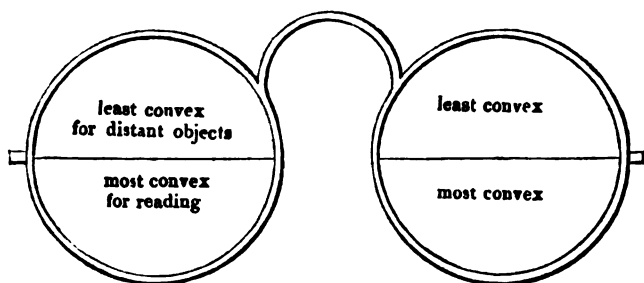
Our constitution seems not to be well understood with you. If the congress were a permanent body, there would be more reason in being jealous of giving it powers. But its members are chosen annually, cannot be chosen more than three years successively, nor more than three years in seven; and any of them may be recalled at any time, whenever their constituents shall be dissatisfied with their conduct. They are of the people, and return again to mix with the people, having no more durable pre-eminence than the different grains of sand in an hour-glass. Such an assembly cannot easily become dangerous to

\* See Letter to Mrs. Bache, Jan. 20, 1784.

liberty. They are the servants of the people, sent together to do the people's business, and promote the public welfare ; their powers must be sufficient, or their duties cannot be performed. They have no profitable appointments, but a mere payment of daily wages, such as are scarcely equivalent to their expenses ; so that having no chance for great places, and enormous salaries or pensions, as in some countries, there is no canvassing or bribing for elections. I wish Old England were as happy in its government, but I do not see it. Your people, however, think their constitution the best in the world, and affect to despise ours. It is comfortable to have a good opinion of one-self, and of every thing that belongs to us ; to think one's own religion, king, and wife, the best of all possible wives, kings, or religions. I remember three Greenlanders, who had travelled two years in Europe, under the care of some Moravian missionaries, and had visited Germany, Denmark, Holland, and England ; when I asked them at Philadelphia (where they were in their way home) whether, now they had seen how much more commodiously the white people lived by the help of the arts, they would not choose to remain among us ? their answer was, that they were pleased with having had an opportunity of seeing so many fine things, *but they chose to LIVE in their own country.* Which country, by the way, consisted of rock only, for the Moravians were obliged to carry earth in their ship from New York, for the purpose of making a cabbage garden.

By Mr. Dollond's saying, that my double spectacles can only serve particular eyes, I doubt he has not been rightly informed of their construction. I ima-

gine it will be found pretty generally true, that the same convexity of glass, through which a man sees clearest and best at the distance proper for reading, is not the best for greater distances. I therefore had formerly two pair of spectacles, which I shifted occasionally, as in travelling I sometimes read, and often wanted to regard the prospects. Finding this change troublesome, and not always sufficiently ready, I had the glasses cut, and half of each kind associated in the same circle, thus—



By this means, as I wear my spectacles constantly, I have only to move my eyes up or down, as I want to see distinctly far or near, the proper glasses being always ready. This I find more particularly convenient since my being in France; the glasses that serve me best at table to see what I eat, not being the best to see the faces of those on the other side of the table who speak to me; and when one's ears are not well accustomed to the sounds of a language, a sight of the movements in the features of him that speaks, helps to explain; so that I understand French better by the help of my spectacles.

My intended translator of your piece, the only one I know who understands the *subject*, as well as the two languages, (which a translator ought to do, or

he cannot make so good a translation,) is at present occupied in an affair that prevents his undertaking it; but that will soon be over. I thank you for the notes. I should be glad to have another of the printed pamphlets.

We shall always be ready to take your children if you send them to us. I only wonder, that since London draws to itself, and consumes such numbers of your country people, the country should not, to supply their places, want and willingly receive the children you have to dispose of. That circumstance, together with the multitude who voluntarily part with their freedom as men, to serve for a time as lacqueys, or for life as soldiers, in consideration of small wages, seems to me proof that your island is over-peopled. And yet it is afraid of emigrations!

Adieu, my dear friend, and believe me ever, yours  
very affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO \* \* \*

DEAR SIR,

Passy, June 20, 1785.

I have just received the only letter from you that has given me pain. It informs me of your intention to attempt passing to England in the car of a balloon. In the present imperfect state of that invention, I think it much too soon to hazard a voyage of that distance. It is said here by some of those who have had experience, that as yet they have not found means to keep up a balloon more than two hours; for that by now and then losing air to prevent rising too high and bursting, and now and then discharging ballast to avoid descending too low, these means of regulation are exhausted. Besides this, all the circumstances of danger by disap-



pointment, in the operation of *Soupapes*,\* &c. &c. seem not to be yet well known, and therefore not easily provided against. For on Wednesday last M. Pilâtre de Rosier, who had studied the subject as much as any man, lost his support in the air, by the bursting of his balloon, or by some other means we are yet unacquainted with, and fell with his companion† from the height of one thousand toises, on the rocky coast, and were both found dashed to pieces. You, having lived a good life, do not fear death. But pardon the anxious freedom of a friend, if he tells you that the continuance of your life being of importance to your family and your country, though you might laudably hazard it for their good, you have no right to risk it for a fancy. I pray God this may reach you in time, and have some effect towards changing your design : being ever, my dear friend, yours affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO GRANVILLE SHARPE, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, July 5, 1786.

I received the books you were so kind as to send me by Mr. Drown. Please to accept my hearty thanks. Your writings, which always have some public good for their object, I always read with pleasure. I am perfectly of your opinion with respect to the salutary law of gavel-kind, and hope it may in time be established throughout America. In six of the states already the lands of intestates are divided equally among the children if all girls; but there is a double share given to the eldest son, for which I see no more reason than in giving such share

\* Valves.

† The Marquis d'Arlandes.

to the eldest daughter ; and think there should be no distinction. Since my being last in France, I have seen several of our eldest sons spending idly their fortunes by residing in Europe, and neglecting their own country ; these are from the southern states. The northern young men stay at home, and are industrious useful citizens ; the more equal division of their fathers' fortunes not enabling them to ramble and spend their shares abroad, which is so much the better for their country.

I like your piece on the election of bishops. There is a fact in Hollingshed's Chronicle, the latter part relating to Scotland, which shows, if my memory does not deceive me, that the first bishop in that country was elected by the clergy ; I mentioned it some time past in a letter to two young men,\* who asked my advice about obtaining ordination, which had been denied them by the bishops in England, unless they would take the oath of allegiance to the king ; and I said, I imagine that unless a bishop is soon sent over, with a power to consecrate others, so that we may have no future occasion of applying to England for ordination, we may think it right, after reading your piece, to elect also.

The liturgy you mention was an abridgment of that made by a noble lord of my acquaintance, who requested me to assist him by taking the rest of the book, viz. the catechism and the reading and singing psalms. These I abridged by retaining of the catechism only the two questions, *What is your duty to God? What is your duty to your neighbor?* with answers. The psalms were much contracted by

\* See Letter to Messrs. Weems and Gant, July 18, 1784.

leaving out the repetitions (of which I found more than I could have imagined) and the imprecations, which appeared not to suit well the Christian doctrine of forgiveness of injuries, and doing good to enemies. The book was printed for Wilkie in St. Paul's Church-yard, but never much noticed. Some were given away, very few sold, and I suppose the bulk became waste paper. In the prayers so much was retrenched, that approbation could hardly be expected; but I think with you a moderate abridgment might not only be useful, but generally acceptable.

I am now on the point of departing for America, where I shall be glad occasionally to hear from you, and of your welfare; being with sincere and great esteem, dear sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO DAVID HARTLEY, ESQ. M.P.

Passy, July 5, 1785.

I cannot quit the coasts of Europe without taking leave of my ever dear friend Mr. Hartley. We were long fellow-laborers in the best of all works, the work of peace. I leave you still in the field; but having finished my day's task, I am going home *to go to bed!* Wish me a good night's rest, as I do you a pleasant evening. Adieu! and believe me ever yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN,  
in his 80th year.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY GENERAL WASHINGTON.

DEAR SIR,

Philadelphia, Sept. 20, 1785.

I am just arrived from a country where the reputation of General Washington runs very high, and where every body wishes to see him in person; but

being told that it is not likely he ever will favor them with a visit, they hope at least for a sight of his perfect resemblance by means of their principal statuary, Mr. Houdon, whom Mr. Jefferson and myself agreed with to come over for the purpose of taking a bust, in order to make the intended statue for the state of Virginia. He is here; but, the materials and instruments he sent down the Seine from Paris not being arrived at Havre when we sailed, he was obliged to leave them, and is now busied in supplying himself here. As soon as that is done, he proposes to wait on you in Virginia, as he understands there is no prospect of your coming hither, which would indeed make me very happy, as it would give me the opportunity of congratulating with you personally on the final success of your long and painful labors in the service of our country, which have laid us all under eternal obligations. With the greatest and most sincere esteem and respect, I am, dear sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MR. AND MRS. JAY.

DEAR FRIENDS,

Philadelphia, Sept. 21, 1785.

I received your very kind letter of the 16th, congratulating me on my safe arrival with my grandsons; an event that indeed makes me very happy, being what I have long ardently wished, and considering the growing infirmities of age, began almost to despair of. I am now in the bosom of my family, and find four 'new little prattlers, who cling about the knees of their grandpapa, and afford me great pleasure. The affectionate welcome I met with from my fellow-citizens was far beyond my expecta-

tion. I bore my voyage very well, and find myself rather better for it; so that I have every possible reason to be satisfied with my having undertaken and performed it. When I was at Passy I could not bear a wheel carriage; and being discouraged in my project of descending the Seine in a boat, by the difficulties and tediousness of its navigation in so dry a season, I accepted the offer of one of the king's litters, carried by large mules, which brought me well, though in walking slowly, to Havre. Thence I went over in a packet boat to Southampton, where I staid four days, till the ship came for me to Spit-head. Several of my London friends came there to see me, particularly the good Bishop of St. Asaph and family, who staid with me to the last. In short I am now so well as to think it possible that I may once more have the pleasure of seeing you both perhaps at New York, with my dear young friends (who I hope may not have quite forgotten me); for I imagine that on the sandy road between Burlington and Amboy I could bear an easy coach, and the rest is water. I rejoice to hear that you continue well; being with true and great esteem and affection, your most obedient servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO DAVID HARTLEY, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

Philadelphia, Oct. 27, 1785.

Your newspapers are filled with accounts of distresses and miseries that these states are plunged into since their separation from Britain. You may believe me when I tell you that there is no truth in those accounts. I find all property in lands and houses augmented vastly in value; that of houses

and towns at least fourfold. The crops have been plentiful, and yet the produce sells high, to the great profit of the farmer. At the same time all imported goods sell at low rates, some cheaper than the first cost. Working people have plenty of employ and high pay for their labor. These appear to me as certain signs of public prosperity. Some traders indeed complain that trade is dead; but this pretended evil is not an effect of inability in the people to buy, pay for, and consume the usual articles of commerce, as far as they have occasion for them, it is owing merely to there being too many traders who have crowded hither from all parts of Europe with more goods than the natural demand of the country requires. And what in Europe is called the debt of America is chiefly the debt of these adventurers and supercargoes to their principals, with which the settled inhabitants of America, who never paid better for what they want and buy, have nothing to do. As to the contentment of the inhabitants with the change of government, methinks a stronger proof cannot be desired, than what they have given in my reception. You know the part I had in that change; and you see in the papers the addresses from all ranks with which your friend was welcomed home, and the sentiments they contain confirmed yesterday in the choice of him for president by the council and new assembly, which was unanimous; a single voice in seventy-seven excepted.

I remember you used to wish for newspapers from America. Herewith I send you a few, and you shall be regularly supplied, if you can put me in a way of sending them, so as that you may not be obliged to pay postage.

With unchangeable esteem and respect, I am, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO M. MATHON DE LA COUR.

SIR,

Philadelphia, Nov. 17, 1785.

I received duly the letter you did me the honor of writing to me the 25th of June past, together with the collection you have made *des comptes rendus de vos contrôleurs généraux*; and your *Discours sur les moyens d'encourager le patriotisme dans les monarchies*. The first is a valuable work, as containing a great deal of useful information; but the second I am particularly charmed with, the sentiments being delightfully just, and expressed with such force and clearness, that I am persuaded the pamphlet, though small, must have a great effect on the minds of both princes and people, and thence be productive of much good to mankind. Be pleased to accept my hearty thanks for both.

It is right to be sowing good seed whenever we have an opportunity, since some of it may be productive. An instance of this you should be acquainted with, as it may afford you pleasure. The reading of Fortuné Ricard's Testament has put it into the head and heart of a citizen to leave two thousand pounds sterling to two American cities, who are to lend it in small sums at five per cent. to young beginners in business; and the accumulation, after an hundred years, to be laid out in public works of benefit to those cities.\* With great esteem, I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

\* See codicil to Dr. Franklin's will, in *Memoirs of his Life*. Part v. p. 418, 4to. ed.

TO DR. BANCROFT, F.R.S. &C. LONDON.

DEAR SIR,

Philadelphia, Nov. 26, 1785.

I received your kind letter of September 5, informing me of the intention Mr. Dilly has of printing a new edition of my writings, and of his desire that I would furnish him with such additions as I may think proper. At present all my papers and manuscripts are so mixt with other things, by the confusions occasioned in sudden and various removals during the late troubles, that I can hardly find any thing. But having nearly finished an addition to my house, which will afford me room to put all in order, I hope soon to be able to comply with such a request; but I hope Mr. Dilly will have a good understanding in the affair with Henry and Johnson, who having risked the former impressions, may suppose they thereby acquired some right in the copy. As to the life proposed to be written, if it be by the same hand who furnished a sketch to Dr. Lettſom, which he sent me, I am afraid it will be found too full of errors for either you or me to correct: and having been persuaded by my friends, Messrs. Vaughan and Monsieur Le Veillard, Mr. James of this place, and some others, that such a life, written by myself, may be useful to the rising generation, I have made some progress in it, and hope to finish it this winter; so I cannot but wish that project of Mr. Dilly's biographer may be laid aside. I am nevertheless thankful to you for your friendly offer of correcting it.

As to public affairs, it is long since I gave over all expectations of a commercial treaty between us and Britain; and I think we can do as well, or better without one than she can. Our harvests are plenty, our produce fetches a high price in hard money, and



there is in every part of our country incontestable marks of public felicity. We discover, indeed, some errors in our general and particular constitutions, which it is no wonder they should have, the time in which they were formed being considered. But these we shall soon mend. The little disorders you have heard of in some of the states, raised by a few wrong heads, are subsiding, and will probably soon be extinguished. My best wishes and those of my family attend you. We shall be happy to see you here, when it suits you to visit us; being with sincere and great esteem, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO DR. SHIPLEY, BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH.

DEAR FRIEND,

Philadelphia, Feb. 24, 1786.

I received lately your kind letter of November 27. My reception here was, as you have heard, very honorable indeed; but I was betrayed by it and by some remains of ambition, from which I had imagined myself free, to accept of the chair of government for the state of Pennsylvania, when the proper thing for me was repose and a private life. I hope however to be able to bear the fatigue for one year, and then to retire.

I have much regretted our having so little opportunity for conversation when we last met.\* You could have given me informations and counsels that I wanted; but we were scarce a minute together without being broken in upon. I am to thank you however for the pleasure I had after our parting, in

\* At Southampton, previous to Dr. Franklin's embarking for the United States. See Memoirs of his Life, Part iv. p. 372, 4to ed.

reading the new book\* you gave me, which I think generally well written and likely to do good; though the reading time of most people is of late so taken up with newspapers and little periodical pamphlets, that few now-a-days venture to attempt reading a quarto volume. I have admired to see that in the last century a folio, *Burton on Melancholy*, went through six editions in about forty years. We have, I believe, more readers now, but not of such large books.

You seem desirous of knowing what progress we make here in improving our governments. We are I think in the right road of improvement, for we are making experiments. I do not oppose all that seem wrong, for the multitude are more effectually set right by experience, than kept from going wrong by reasoning with them: and I think we are daily more and more enlightened; so that I have no doubt of our obtaining in a few years as much public felicity as good government is capable of affording. Your newspapers are filled with fictitious accounts of anarchy, confusion, distresses and miseries we are supposed to be involved in, as consequences of the revolution; and the few remaining friends of the old government among us take pains to magnify every little inconvenience a change in the course of commerce may have occasioned. To obviate the complaints they endeavor to excite, was written the enclosed little piece,† from which you may form a truer idea of our own situation than your own public prints would give you: and I can assure you that the great body of our nation find themselves happy

\* Paley's Moral Philosophy.

† Uncertain what piece is alluded to.

in the change, and have not the smallest inclination to return to the domination of Britain. There could not be a stronger proof of the general approbation of the measures that promoted the change, and of the change itself, than has been given by the assembly and council of this state, in the nearly unanimous choice for their governor, of one who had been so much concerned in those measures; the assembly being themselves the unbribed choice of the people, and therefore may be truly supposed of the same sentiments. I say nearly unanimous, because of between 70 and 80 votes, there were only my own and one other in the negative.

As to my domestic circumstances, of which you kindly desire to hear something, they are at present as happy as I could wish them. I am surrounded by my offspring, a dutiful and affectionate daughter in my house, with six grandchildren, the eldest of which you have seen, who is now at college in the next street, finishing the learned part of his education; the others promising both for parts and good dispositions. What their conduct may be when they grow up and enter the important scenes of life, I shall not live to *see*, and I cannot *foresee*. I therefore enjoy among them the present hour, and leave the future to Providence.

He that raises a large family does indeed, while he lives to observe them, *stand*, as Watts says, *a broader mark for sorrow*; but then he stands a broader mark for pleasure too. When we launch our little fleet of barks into the ocean, bound to different ports, we hope for each a prosperous voyage; but contrary winds, hidden shoals, storms and enemies, come in for a share in the disposition of events; and

though these occasion a mixture of disappointment, yet, considering the risk where we can make no insurance, we should think ourselves happy if some return with success. My son's son, (Temple Franklin,) whom you have also seen, having had a fine farm of 600 acres conveyed to him by his father when we were at Southampton, has dropped for the present his views of acting in the political line, and applies himself ardently to the study and practice of agriculture. This is much more agreeable to me, who esteem it the most useful, the most independent, and therefore the noblest of employments. His lands are on navigable water, communicating with the Delaware, and but about sixteen miles from this city. He has associated to himself a very skilful English farmer lately arrived here, who is to instruct him in the business, and partakes for a term of the profits; so that there is a great apparent probability of their success. You will kindly expect a word or two concerning myself. My health and spirits continue, thanks to God, as when you saw me. The only complaint I then had does not grow worse, and is tolerable. I still have enjoyment in the company of my friends; and, being easy in my circumstances, have many reasons to like living. But the course of nature must soon put a period to my present mode of existence. This I shall submit to with less regret, as, having seen during a long life a good deal of this world, I feel a growing curiosity to be acquainted with some other; and can cheerfully with filial confidence resign my spirit to the conduct of that great and good parent of mankind who created it, and who has so graciously protected and prospered me from my birth to the present hour.

Wherever I am, I hope always to retain the pleasing remembrance of your friendship ; being with sincere and great esteem, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO M. LE VEILLARD, OF PASSY.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Philadelphia, March 16, 1786.

I received and read with great pleasure your kind letter of October 9. It informed me of your welfare, and that of the best of good women, and of her amiable daughter, who I think will tread in her steps. My effects came all in the same ship, in good order ; and we are now drinking every day *les eaux épurées de Passy* with great satisfaction, as they kept well, and seem to be rendered more agreeable by the long voyage. I am here in the bosom of my family, and am not only happy myself, but have the felicity of seeing my country so. Be assured that all the stories spread in the English papers of our distresses, and confusions, and discontents with our new governments, are as chimerical as the history of my being in chains at Algiers. They exist only in the wishes of our enemies. America never was in higher prosperity, her produce abundant and bearing a good price, her working people all employed and well paid, and all property in lands and houses of more than treble the value it bore before the war ; and our commerce being no longer the monopoly of British merchants, we are furnished with all the foreign commodities we need, at much more reasonable rates than heretofore. So that we have no doubt of being able to discharge more speedily the debt incurred by the war than at first was apprehended. Our modes of collecting taxes are indeed

as yet imperfect, and we have need of more skill in financiering; but we improve in that kind of knowledge daily by experience. That our people are contented with the revolution, with their new constitutions, and their foreign connexions, nothing can afford a stronger proof than the universally cordial and joyous reception with which they welcomed the return of one that was supposed to have had a considerable share in promoting them. All this is in answer to that part of your letter in which you seem to have been too much impressed with some of the ideas which those lying English papers endeavor to inculcate concerning us.

I am astonished by what you write concerning the *Prince Evêque*.\* If the charges against him are made good, it will be another instance of the truth of those proverbs which teach us, that *prodigality begets necessity*; that *without economy no revenue is sufficient*; and that *it is hard for an empty sack to stand upright*.

Will you also be so good as to present my respectful compliments to Madame la Duchesse d'Enville, and to M. le Duc de la Rochefoucault? You may communicate the political part of this letter to that excellent man. His good heart will rejoice to hear of the welfare of America.

I made no progress when at sea in the history you mention:† but I was not idle there, having written three pieces, each of some length: one on nautical matters; another on chimnies; and a third a description of my vase for consuming smoke, with directions

\* The Cardinal de Rohan.

† Dr. Franklin's *Memoirs of his Life*.

for using it.\* These are all now printing in the Transactions of our Philosophical Society, of which I hope soon to send you a copy.

You know my situation, involved in public cares ; but they cannot make me forget that you and I love one another, and that I am ever, my dear friend,  
yours most affectionately, B. FRANKLIN.

TO MRS. HEWSON, LONDON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, Philadelphia, May 6, 1786.

A long winter has passed and I have not had the pleasure of a line from you, acquainting me with your and your children's welfare, since I left England. I suppose you have been in Yorkshire out of the way and knowledge of opportunities ; for I will not think you have forgotten me. To make me some amends, I received a few days past a large packet from Mr. Williams, dated September, 1776, near ten years since, containing three letters from you, one of December 12, 1775. This packet had been received by Mr. Bache after my departure for France, lay dormant among his papers during all my absence, and has just now broke out upon me *like words*, that had been, as somebody said, "*congealed in northern air*." Therein I find all the pleasing little family history of your children ; how William had begun to spell, overcoming by strength of memory all the difficulty occasioned by the common wretched alphabet ; while you were convinced of the utility of our new one. How Tom, genius-like, struck out new paths, and relinquishing the old names of the letters, called U *Bell* and P *Bottle*. How Eliza began to grow

\* See Writings, Part IV. *Papers on Philosophical Subjects*.

jolly, that is fat and handsome, resembling Aunt Rook, whom I used to call *my lovely*; together with all the *then* news of Lady Blunt's having produced at length a boy; of Dolly's being well, and of poor good Catherine's decease. Of your affairs with Muir and Atkinson, and of their contract for feeding the fish in the channel. Of the Vyns, and their jaunt to Cambridge in the long carriage. Of Dolly's journey to Wales with Mr. Scot. Of the Wilkes's, the Pearces, Elphinston, &c. &c. Concluding with a kind of promise, that as soon as the ministry and congress agreed to make peace, I should have you with me in America. That peace has been some time made, but, alas! the promise is not yet fulfilled. —And why is it not fulfilled?

I have found my family here in health, good circumstances, and well respected by their fellow-citizens. The companions of my youth are indeed almost all departed, but I find an agreeable society among their children and grand-children. I have public business enough to preserve me from *ennui*, and private amusement besides, in conversation, books, my garden, and *cribbage*. Considering our well-furnished plentiful market as the best of gardens, I am turning mine, in the midst of which my house stands, into grass-plats, and gravel walks, with trees and flowering shrubs. Cards we sometimes play here in long winter evenings, but it is as they play at chess, not for money but for honor, or the pleasure of beating one another. This will not be quite a novelty to you; as you may remember we played together in that manner during the winter you helped me to pass so agreeably at Passy. I have indeed now and then a little compunction in reflecting that



I spend time so idly ; but another reflection comes to relieve me, whispering, “ You know the soul is immortal ; why then should you be such a niggard of a little time, when you have a whole eternity before you ? ” So being easily convinced, and, like other reasonable creatures, satisfied with a small reason, when it is in favor of doing what I have a mind to do, I shuffle the cards again and begin another game.

As to public amusements, we have neither plays nor operas, but we had yesterday a kind of oratorio, as you will see by the enclosed paper ; and we have assemblies, balls, and concerts, besides little parties at one another’s houses, in which there is sometimes dancing, and frequently good music ; so that we jog on in life as pleasantly as you do in England, any where but in London ; for there you have plays performed by good actors. That however is, I think, the only advantage London has over Philadelphia.

Temple has turned his thoughts to agriculture, which he pursues ardently, being in possession of a fine farm that his father lately conveyed to him. Ben is finishing his studies at college, and continues to behave as well as when you knew him, so that I still think he will make you a good son. His younger brothers and sisters are also all promising, appearing to have good tempers and dispositions, as well as good constitutions. As to myself, I think my general health and spirits rather better than when you saw me, and the particular malady I then complained of, continues tolerable. With sincere and very great esteem, I am ever, my dear friend,  
yours most affectionately, B. FRANKLIN.

TO NOAH WEBSTER, ESQ.

SIR,

Philadelphia, June 18, 1786.

I received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me on the 24th past, with the scheme enclosed of your reformed alphabet. I think the reformation not only necessary, but practicable; but have so much to say to you on the subject, that I wish to see and confer with you upon it, as that would save much time and writing. Sounds, till such an alphabet is fixed, not being easily explained or discoursed of clearly upon paper. I have formerly considered this matter pretty fully, and contrived some of the means of carrying it into execution, so as gradually to render the reformation general. Our ideas are so nearly similar, that I make no doubt of our easily agreeing on the plan, and you may depend on the best support I may be able to give it, as a part of your institute, of which I wish you would bring with you a complete copy, having as yet seen only a part of it: I shall then be better able to recommend it, as you desire. Hoping to have soon the pleasure of seeing you, I do not enlarge, but am with sincere esteem, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO WILLIAM COOKE, ESQ.

SIR,

Philadelphia, August 12, 1786.

I had never before been acquainted that the name of your intended new state had any relation with my name, having understood that it was called *Frank Land*. It is a very great honor indeed that its inhabitants have done me, and I should be happy if it were in my power to show how sensible I am of

it, by something more essential than my wishes for their prosperity.

Having resided some years past in Europe, and being but lately arrived thence, I have not had an opportunity of being well informed of the points in dispute between you and the state of North Carolina. I can therefore only say, that I think you are perfectly right in resolving to submit them to the discretion of congress, and to abide by their determination. It is a wise and impartial tribunal, which can have no sinister views to warp its judgment. It is happy for us all, that we have now in our own country such a council to apply to, for composing our differences, without being obliged, as formerly, to carry them across the ocean to be decided, at an immense expense, by a council which knew little of our affairs, would hardly take any pains to understand them, and which often treated our applications with contempt, and rejected them with injurious language. Let us therefore cherish and respect our own tribunal; for the more generally it is held in high regard, the more able it will be to answer effectually the ends of institution, the quieting of our contentions, and thereby promoting our common peace and happiness.

I do not hear any talk of an adjournment of congress, concerning which you inquire; and I rather think it likely they may continue to sit out their year, as it is but lately they have been able to make a quorum for business, which must therefore probably be in arrear. If you proceed in your intended journey, I shall be glad to see you as you pass through Philadelphia. In the mean time, I have the honor to be, very respectfully, sir, your most obedient servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO COLONEL HUNTER.

Philadelphia, Nov. 24, 1786.

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,

It rejoiced me much to learn by your kind letter of February last, which I received about ten days since, that you are still in the land of the living, and that you are snug at Bath, the very place that I think gives you the best chance of passing the evening of life agreeably. I too am got into my *niche*, after being kept out of it 24 years by foreign employments. It is a very good house that I built so long ago to retire into, without being able till now to enjoy it. I am again surrounded by my friends, with a fine family of grand-children about my knees, and an affectionate good daughter and son-in-law to take care of me. And after fifty years' public service, I have the pleasure to find the esteem of my country with regard to me undiminished; the late re-election of me to the presidentship, notwithstanding the different parties we are split into, being absolutely unanimous. This I tell you, not merely to indulge my own vanity, but because I know you love me, and will be pleased to hear of whatever happens that is agreeable to your friend.

I find Mr. Anstey, whom you recommend to me, a very agreeable sensible man, and shall render him any service that may lie in my power. I thank you for the New Bath Guide: I had read it formerly, but it has afforded me fresh pleasure.

Your newspapers, to please honest *John Bull*, paint our situation here in frightful colors, as if we were very miserable since we broke our connexion with him. But I will give you some remarks by which you may form your own judgment. Our husbandmen, who are the bulk of the nation, have

had plentiful crops, their produce sells at high prices and for ready hard money : wheat, for instance, at 8s. and 8s. 6d. per bushel. Our working-people are all employed and get high wages, are well fed and well clad. Our estates in houses are trebled in value by the rising of rents since the revolution. Buildings in Philadelphia increase amazingly, besides small towns arising in every quarter of the country. The laws govern, justice is well administered, and property as secure as in any country on the globe. Our wilderness lands are daily buying up by new settlers, and our settlements extend rapidly to the westward. European goods were never so cheaply afforded us, as since Britain has no longer the monopoly of supplying us. In short, all among us may be happy, who have happy dispositions, such being necessary to happiness even in paradise.

I speak these things of Pennsylvania, with which I am most acquainted : as to the other states, when I read in all the papers of the extravagant rejoicings every 4th of July, the day on which was signed the declaration of independence, I am convinced that none of them are discontented with the revolution.

Adieu, my dear friend, and believe me ever, with sincere esteem and affection, yours most truly,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MR. SMALL.

DEAR FRIEND, Philadelphia, February 19, 1787.

I received your favor of June last, and thank you for the kind congratulations contained in it. What you have heard of my malady is true, "that it does not grow worse." Thanks be to God I still enjoy pleasure in the society of my friends and books, and much

more in the prosperity of my country, concerning which your people are continually deceiving themselves.

I am glad the improvement of the Book of Common Prayer\* has met with your approbation and that of good Mrs. Baldwin. It is not yet, that I know of, received in public practice any where ; but as it is said that good motions never die, perhaps in time it may be found useful.

I read with pleasure the account you give of the flourishing state of your commerce and manufactures, and of the plenty you have of resources to carry the nation through all its difficulties. You have one of the finest countries in the world, and if you can be cured of the folly of making war for trade, (in which wars more has been always expended than the profits of any trade can compensate,) you may make it one of the happiest. Make the best of your own natural advantages instead of endeavoring to diminish those of other nations, and there is no doubt but you may yet prosper and flourish. Your beginning to consider France no longer as a natural enemy, is a mark of progress in the good sense of the nation, of which posterity will find the benefit ; in the rarity of wars, the diminution of taxes, and increase of riches.

As to the refugees whom you think we were so impolitic in rejecting, I do not find that they are missed here, or that any body regrets their absence. And certainly they must be happier where they are, under the government they admire, and be better received among a people whose cause they espoused and fought for, than among those who cannot so soon

\* See Letter to Granville Sharpe, esq. July 5, 1785.

have forgotten the destruction of their habitations, and the spilt blood of their dearest friends and near relations.

I often think with great pleasure on the happy days I passed in England with my and your learned and ingenious friends, who have left us to join the majority in the world of spirits. Every one of them now knows more than all of us they have left behind. It is to me a comfortable reflection, that since we must live for ever in a future state, there is a sufficient stock of amusement in reserve for us, to be found in constantly learning something new to eternity, the present quantity of human ignorance infinitely exceeding that of human knowledge.

Adieu, my dear friend ! and believe me, in whatever world, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN,  
in his 82d year.

TO M. LE VEILLARD.

Philadelphia, April 15, 1787.

I am entirely of your opinion, that our independence is not quite complete till we have discharged our public debt. This state is not behind-hand in its proportion, and those who are in arrear are actually employed in contriving means to discharge their respective balances ; but they are not all equally diligent in the business, nor equally successful ; the whole will however be paid, I am persuaded, in a few years.

The English have not delivered up the posts on our frontier, agreeable to treaty ; the pretence is, that our merchants here have not paid their debts. I was a little provoked when I first heard this, and I wrote

some remarks upon it which I send you : they have been written near a year, but I have not yet published them, being unwilling to encourage any of our people who may be able to pay, in their neglect of that duty. The paper is therefore only for your amusement and that of our excellent friend the Duke de la Rochefoucault.

As to my malady, concerning which you so kindly inquire, I have never had the least doubt of its being the stone ; and I am sensible that it has increased ; but on the whole it does not give me more pain than when at Passy. People who live long, who will drink of the cup of life to the very bottom, must expect to meet with some of the usual dregs ; and when I reflect on the number of terrible maladies human nature is subject to, I think myself favored in having to my share only the stone and gout.

You were right in conjecturing that I wrote the remarks on the "*thoughts concerning executive justice.*"\* I have no copy of those remarks at hand, and forget how the saying was introduced, that it is better a thousand guilty persons should escape, than one innocent suffer. Your criticisms thereon appear to be just, and I imagine you may have misapprehended my intention in mentioning it. I always thought with you, that the prejudice in Europe which supposes a family dishonored by the punishment of one of its members, was very absurd, it being on the contrary my opinion, "that a rogue hanged out of a family does it more honor than ten that live in it."

\* See WRITINGS, Part II.



TO THE DUKE DE LA ROCHEFOUCAULT, PARIS.

Philadelphia, April 15, 1787.

I have been happy in receiving three very kind letters from my greatly respected and esteemed friend, since my being in America. In mine of this date to M. Le Veillard, I have made the best apology I could for my being so bad a correspondent. I will not trouble you with a repetition of it, as I know you often see him. I will only confess my fault, and trust to your candor and goodness for my pardon.

Your friendly congratulations on my arrival and reception here were very obliging. The latter was, as you have heard, extremely flattering. The two parties in the assembly and council, the constitutionists and anti-constitutionists joined in requesting my service as counsellor, and afterwards in electing me as president. Of seventy-four members in council and assembly who voted by ballot, there was in my first election but one negative beside my own; and in the second, after a year's service, only my own. And I experience from all the principal people in the government every attention and assistance that can be desired towards making the task as little burthensome to me as possible. So I am going on very comfortably hitherto with my second year, and I do not at present see any likelihood of a change: but future events are always uncertain, being governed by Providence, or subject to chances; and popular favor is very precarious, being sometimes *lost* as well as *gained* by good actions, so I do not depend on a continuance of my present happiness, and therefore shall not be surprised if, before my time of

service expires, something should happen to diminish it.

These states in general enjoy peace and plenty. There have been some disorders in the Massachusetts and Rhode island governments; those in the former are quelled for the present; those of the latter, being contentions for and against paper money, will probably continue some time. Maryland too is divided on the same subject, the assembly being for it, and the senate against it. Each is now employed in endeavoring to gain the people to its party against the next elections, and 'tis probable the assembly may prevail. Paper money in moderate quantities has been found beneficial; when more than the occasions of commerce require, it depreciated and was mischievous; and the populace are apt to demand more than is necessary. In this state we have some, and it is useful; and I do not hear of any clamor for more.

There seems to be but little thought at present in the particular states, of mending their particular constitutions; but the grand federal constitution is generally blamed as not having given sufficient powers to congress, the federal head. A convention is therefore appointed to revise that constitution, and propose a better. You will see by the enclosed paper that your friend is to be one in that business, though he doubts his malady may not permit his giving constant attendance. I am glad to see that you are named as one of a general assembly to be convened in France. I flatter myself that great good may accrue to that dear nation from the deliberations of such an assembly. I pray God to give it his blessing.

I sympathise with you and the family most sincerely, in the great loss sustained by the decease of that excellent woman.\* It must be indeed a heavy one. My best wishes attend those that remain, and that the happiness of your sweet domestic society may long continue without such another interruption.

I send herewith a volume of the transactions of our philosophical society for you, another for M. de Condorcet, and a third for the academy. The war had interrupted our attempts to improve ourselves in scientific matters, but we now begin to resume them.

The bearer of this is Mr. Paine, the author of a famous piece intitled *Common Sense*, published here with great effect on the minds of the people at the beginning of the revolution. He is an ingenious, honest man, and as such I beg leave to recommend him to your civilities. He carries with him the model of a bridge of a new construction, his own invention, concerning which I intended to have recommended him to Mr. Peyronnet, but I hear he is no more. You can easily procure Mr. Paine a sight of the models and drawings of the collection appertaining to the *Ponts et Chaussées*; they must afford him useful lights on the subject. We want a bridge over our river Skuykill, and have no artist here regularly bred to that kind of architecture.

My grandsons are very sensible of the honor of your remembrance, and desire me to present their respects.

With the most sincere and perfect esteem and attachment, I am ever, my dear friend, your most obedient and most humble servant, B. FRANKLIN.

\* The Duchess D'Anville, mother of the Duke de la Rochefoucault.

TO THE MARQUIS DE CHASTELLEUX.\*

DEAR SIR,

Philadelphia, April 17, 1787.

Your most pleasing letter, accompanied by the invaluable present of your journal, and translation of Colonel Humphrey's poem, came to hand but lately, though dated in June last. I believe they have been in the West Indies. They have given me a great deal of pleasure in the perusal, as every thing of yours always did. The portrait you have made of our country and people is what in painting is called *a handsome likeness*, for which we are much obliged to you. We shall be the better for it if we endeavor to merit what you kindly say in our favor, and to correct what you justly censure. I am told the journal is translated into English, and printed in one of the states, I know not which, not having seen the translation.

The newspapers tell us, that you are about to have an assembly of notables, to consult on improvements of your government. It is somewhat singular, that we should be engaged in the same project here at the same time; but so it is; and a convention for the purpose of revising and amending our federal constitution is to meet at this place next month. I hope both assemblies will be blessed with success, and that their deliberations and counsels may promote the happiness of both nations.

In the state of Pennsylvania, government, not-

\* FRANCOIS JEAN MARQUIS DE CHASTELLEUX, camp-marshal in the French army, and a member of the French academy, died at Paris, October 24, 1788. He was of an illustrious family, to which he was an ornament by his military services and his literary works, of which the principal are, a Treatise on Public Happiness, 8vo, and Travels in North America in 1780—1782, 8vo.

withstanding our parties, goes on at present very smoothly, so that I have much less trouble in my station than was expected. Massachusetts has lately been disturbed by some disorderly people; but they are now quelled. The rest of the states go on pretty well, except some dissensions in Rhode Island and Maryland respecting paper money. Mr. Paine, whom you know, and who undertakes to deliver this letter to you, can give you full information of our affairs, and therefore I need not enlarge upon them. I beg leave to recommend him to your civilities. I have fulfilled all your commissions to the ladies here, who are much flattered by your kind remembrance of them. My family join in every sentiment of esteem and respect with, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MESSRS. THE ABBES CHALUT AND ARNAUD.

DEAR FRIENDS,

Philadelphia, April 17, 1787.

Your reflections on our situation compared with that of many nations of Europe, are very sensible and just. Let me add, that only a virtuous people are capable of freedom. As nations become corrupt and vicious, they have more need of masters.

Our public affairs go on as well as can reasonably be expected after so great an overturning. We have had some disorders in different parts of the country, but we arrange them as they arise, and are daily mending and improving; so that I have no doubt but all will come right in time.

Yours,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO M. LE MARQUIS DE LA FAYETTE.

DEAR FRIEND,

Philadelphia, April 17, 1787.

The indolence of old age, and the perpetual teasing of too much business, have made me so bad a correspondent, that I have hardly written a letter to any friend in Europe during the last twelvemonth : but as I have always a pleasure in hearing from them, which I cannot expect will be continued if I do not write to them, I again take up my pen, and begin with those whose correspondence is of the greatest value ; among which I reckon that of the Marquis de la Fayette.

I was glad to hear of your safe return to Paris, after so long and fatiguing a journey. That is the place where your enlightened zeal for the welfare of our country can employ itself most to our advantage, and I know it is always at work, and indefatigable. Our enemies are, as you observe, very industrious in depreciating our national character. Their abuse sometimes provokes me, and I am almost ready to retaliate ; but I have held my hand, though there is abundant room for recrimination ; because I would do nothing that might hasten another quarrel, by exasperating those who are still sore from their late disgraces. Perhaps it may be best that they should please themselves with fancying us weak, and poor, and divided, and friendless ; they may then not be jealous of our growing strength, (which, since the peace, does really make rapid progress,) and may be less intent on interrupting it.

I do not wonder that the Germans, who know little of free constitutions, should be ready to suppose that such cannot support themselves. We think they may, and we hope to prove it. That

there should be faults in our first sketches or plans of government is not surprising ; rather, considering the times, and the circumstances under which they were formed, it is surprising that the faults are so few. Those in the general confederating articles, are now about to be considered in a convention, called for that express purpose ; these will indeed be the most difficult to rectify. Those of particular states will undoubtedly be rectified, as their inconveniences shall by experience be made manifest. And whatever difference of sentiment there may be among us respecting particular regulations, the enthusiastic rejoicings with which the day of declared independence is annually celebrated, demonstrate the universal satisfaction of the people with the revolution and its grand principles.

I enclose the vocabulary you sent me, with the words of the Shawanese and Delaware languages, which Colonel Harmar has procured for me. He is promised one more complete, which I shall send you as soon as it comes to my hands.

My grandson, whom you so kindly inquire after, is at his estate in the Jerseys and amuses himself with cultivating his lands. I wish he would seriously make a business of it, and renounce all thoughts of public employment ; for I think agriculture the most honorable because the most independent of all professions. But I believe he hankers a little after Paris, or some other of the polished cities of Europe, thinking the society there preferable to what he meets with in the woods of Ancocas ; as it certainly is. If he was now here, he would undoubtedly join with me and the rest of my family (who are much flattered by your remembrance of them) in best

wishes for your health and prosperity, and that of your whole amiable fireside. You will allow an old friend of fourscore to say he *loves* your wife, when he adds, and children, and prays God to bless them all. Adieu! and believe me ever, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO M. L'ABBE MORELLET,\* PARIS.

MY VERY BEST FRIEND, Philadelphia, April 22, 1787.

I received, though long after they were written, your very agreeable favors of October 30, 1785, and February 9, 1786, with the pieces enclosed, productions of the *Auteuil*† academy of *Belles Lettres*. Your kind and friendly wishes and congratulations are extremely obliging. It gives me an infinite pleasure to find that I still retain a favorable 'place in the remembrance of the worthy and the good, whose delightful and instructive society I had the happiness of enjoying while I resided in France.

But though I could not leave that dear nation without regret, I certainly did right in coming home. I am here in my *niche* in my own house in the bosom of my family, my daughter and grand-children all about me, among my old friends or the sons of my friends, who equally respect me, and who all speak and understand the same language with me; and you know that if a man desires to be useful by the exercise of his mental faculties, he loses half their force when in a foreign country, where he can only express himself in a language with which he is not

\* Member of the French Academy.

† The residence of Madame Helvetius, with whom the Abbé Morellet, Cabanis, La Roche, and other literary friends passed much of their time.



well acquainted. In short I enjoy here every opportunity of doing good, and every thing else I could wish for, except repose ; and that I may soon expect either by the cessation of my office, which cannot last more than three years, or by ceasing to live.

I am of the same opinion with you respecting the freedom of commerce, especially in countries where direct taxes are practicable. This will be our case in time, when our wide-extended country fills up with inhabitants. But at present they are so widely settled, often five or six miles distant from one another in the back country, that the collection of a direct tax is almost impossible, the trouble of the collectors' going from house to house amounting to more than the value of the tax. Nothing can be better expressed than your sentiments are on this point, where you prefer liberty of trading, cultivating, manufacturing, &c. even to civil liberty, this being affected but rarely, the other every hour. Our debt occasioned by the war being heavy, we are under the necessity of using imposts and every method we can think of to assist in raising a revenue to discharge it ; but in sentiment we are well disposed to abolish duties on importation as soon as we possibly can afford to do so.

Whatever may be reported by the English in Europe, you may be assured that our people are almost unanimous in being satisfied with the revolution. Their unbounded respect for all who were principally concerned in it, whether as warriors or statesmen, and the enthusiastic joy with which the day of the declaration of independence is every where annually celebrated, are indubitable proofs of this truth. In one or two of the states there have been some dis-

contents on partial and local subjects ; these may have been fomented, as the accounts of them are exaggerated, by our ancient enemies ; but they are now nearly suppressed, and the rest of the states enjoy peace and good order, and flourish amazingly. The crops have been good for several years past, the price of country produce high, from foreign demand, and it fetches ready money : rents are high in our towns, which increase fast by new buildings ; laborers and artisans have high wages well paid, and vast tracts of new land are continually clearing and rendered fit for cultivation. I am, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MR. JORDAIN, LONDON.

DEAR SIR,

Philadelphia, May 18, 1787.

I received your very kind letter of February 27, together with the cask of porter you have been so good as to send me. We have here at present what the French call *une assemblée des notables*, a convention composed of some of the principal people from the several states of our confederation. They did me the honor of dining with me last Wednesday, when the cask was broached, and its contents met with the most cordial reception and universal approbation. In short the company agreed unanimously that it was the best porter they had ever tasted. Accept my thanks, a poor return, but all I can make at present.

Your letter reminds me of many happy days we have passed together, and the dear friends with whom we passed them ; some of whom, alas ! have left us, and we must regret their loss, although our

Hawkesworth\* is become an adventurer in more happy regions; and our Stanley† gone, “where only his own *harmony* can be exceeded.” You give me joy in telling me that you are “on the pinnacle of *content*.” Without it no situation can be happy; with it, any. One means of becoming content with one’s situation is the comparing it with a worse. Thus when I consider how many terrible diseases the human body is liable to. I comfort myself that only three incurable ones have fallen to my share, viz. the gout, the stone, and old age; and that these have not yet deprived me of my natural cheerfulness, my delight in books, and enjoyment of social conversation.

I am glad to hear that Mr. Fitzmaurice is married, and has an amiable lady and children. It is a better plan than that he once proposed, of getting Mrs. Wright to make him a wax-work wife to sit at the head of his table. For after all, wedlock is the natural state of man. A bachelor is not a complete human being. He is like the odd half of a pair of scissors, which has not yet found its fellow, and therefore is not even half so useful as they might be together.

I hardly know which to admire most, the wonderful discoveries made by Herschel,‡ or the indefatigable ingenuity by which he has been enabled to make them. Let us hope, my friend, that when free from

\* John Hawkesworth, LL. D. author of the *Adventurer*, and compiler of the account of the Discoveries made in the South Seas, by Captain Cook.

† John Stanley, an eminent musician and composer, became blind at the age of two years.

‡ The astronomer.

these bodily embarrassments, we may roam together through some of the systems he has explored, conducted by some of our old companions already acquainted with them. Hawkesworth will enliven our progress with his cheerful sensible converse, and Stanley accompany the music of the spheres.

Mr. Watraaugh tells me, for I immediately inquired after her, that your daughter is alive and well. I remember her a most promising and beautiful child, and therefore do not wonder that she is grown, as she says, a fine woman. God bless her and you, my dear friend, and every thing that pertains to you, is the sincere prayer of yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN,  
in his 82d year.

TO GEORGE WHEATLEY, ESQ.

Philadelphia, May 18, 1787.

I received duly my good old friend's letter of the 19th of February. I thank you much for your notes on banks, they are just and solid, as far as I can judge of them. Our bank here has met with great opposition, partly from envy, and partly from those who wish an emission of more paper money, which they think the bank influence prevents. But it has stood all attacks, and went on well notwithstanding the assembly repealed its charter. A new assembly has restored it; and the management is so prudent, that I have no doubt of its continuing to go on well: the dividend has never been less than six per cent., nor will that be augmented for some time, as the surplus profit is reserved to face accidents. The dividend of eleven per cent. which was once made, was from a circumstance scarce avoidable. A

new company was proposed, and prevented only by admitting a number of new partners. As many of the first set were averse to this and chose to withdraw, it was necessary to settle their accounts; so all were adjusted, the profits shared that had been accumulated, and the new and old proprietors jointly began on a new and equal footing. Their notes are always instantly paid on demand, and pass on all occasions as readily as silver, because they will always produce silver.

Your medallion is in good company; it is placed with those of Lord Chatham, Lord Camden, Marquis of Rockingham, Sir George Saville, and some others who honored me with a show of friendly regard when in England. I believe I have thanked you for it, but I thank you again.

I believe with you, that if our plenipo is desirous of concluding a treaty of commerce, he may need patience. If I were in his place, and not otherwise instructed, I should be apt to say "take your own time, gentlemen." If the treaty cannot be made as much to your advantage as to ours, don't make it. I am sure the want of it is not more to our disadvantage than to yours. Let the merchants on both sides treat with one another. *Laissez les faire.*

I have never considered attentively the congress's scheme for coining, and I have it now at hand, so that at present I can say nothing to it. The chief uses of coining seem to be the ascertaining the fineness of the metals, and saving the time that would otherwise be spent in weighing to ascertain the quantity. But the convenience of fixed values to pieces is so great as to force the currency of some whose stamp is worn off that should have assured

their fineness, and which are evidently not of half their due weight; the case at present with the six-pences in England; which, one with another, do not weigh three-pence.

You are now 78, and I am 82: you tread fast upon my heels; but though you have more strength and spirit, you cannot come up with me till I stop, which must now be soon; for I am grown so old as to have buried most of the friends of my youth, and I now often hear persons whom I knew when children, called *old* Mr. such-a-one, to distinguish them from their sons, now men grown and in business; so that by living twelve years beyond David's period, I seem to have intruded myself into the company of posterity, when I ought to have been a-bed and asleep. Yet had I gone at seventy it would have cut off twelve of the most active years of my life, employed too in matters of the greatest importance; but whether I have been doing good or mischief is for time to discover. I only know that I intended well, and I hope all will end well.

Be so good as to present my affectionate respects to Dr. Riley. I am under great obligations to him, and shall write to him shortly. It will be a pleasure to him to know that my malady does not grow sensibly worse; and that is a great point: for it has always been so tolerable, as not to prevent my enjoying the pleasures of society, and being cheerful in conversation: I owe this in a great measure to his good counsels.

Adieu, my dear friend, and believe me ever yours  
most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MR. SMALL.

DEAR SIR,

Philadelphia, September 28, 1787.

I have not lost any of the principles of public economy you once knew me possessed of ; but to get the bad customs of a country changed, and new ones, though better, introduced, it is necessary first to remove the prejudices of the people, enlighten their ignorance, and convince them that their interest will be promoted by the proposed changes : and this is not the work of a day. Our legislators are all landholders ; and they are not yet persuaded that all taxes are finally paid by the land. Besides, our country is so sparsely settled, the habitations, particularly in the back countries, being perhaps five or six miles distant from each other, that the time and labor of the collector in going from house to house, and being obliged to call often before he can recover the tax, amounts to more than the tax is worth, and therefore we have been forced into the mode of indirect taxes, i. e. duties on importation of goods, and excises.

I have made no attempt to introduce the form of prayer here, which you and good Mrs. Baldwin do me the honor to approve. The things of *this* world take up too much of my time, of which indeed I have too little left, to undertake any thing like a reformation in matters of religion. When we can sow good seed, we should however do it, and wait, when we can do no better, with patience, nature's time for their sprouting. Some lie many years in the ground, and at length certain favorable seasons or circumstances bring them forth with vigorous shoots and plentiful productions.

Had I been at home as you wish, soon after the peace, I might possibly have mitigated some of the severities against the royalists, believing as I do that fear and error, rather than malice, occasioned their desertion of their country's cause, and adoption of the king's. The public resentment against them is now so far abated, that none who ask leave to return are refused, and many of them now live among us much at their ease. As to the restoration of confiscated estates, it is an operation that none of our politicians have as yet ventured to propose. They are a sort of people that love to fortify themselves in their projects by precedent. Perhaps they wait to see your government restore the forfeited estates in Scotland to the Scotch, those in Ireland to the Irish, and those in England to the Welch.

I am glad that the distressed exiles who remain with you have received, or are likely to receive, some compensation for their losses, for I commiserate their situation. It was clearly incumbent on the king to indemnify those he had seduced by his proclamations: but it seems not so clearly consistent with the wisdom of parliament to resolve doing it for him. If some mad king should think fit in a freak to make war upon his subjects of Scotland, or upon those of England, by the help of Scotland and Ireland (as the Stuarts did), may he not encourage followers by the precedent of these parliamentary gratuities, and thus set his subjects to cutting one another's throats, first with the hope of sharing in confiscations, and then with that of compensation in case of disappointment? The council of brutes without a fable were aware of this. Lest that fable may perhaps not have fallen in your way, I enclose a copy of it.



Your commercial treaty with France seems to show a growing improvement in the sentiments of both nations in the economical science. All Europe might be a great deal happier, with a little more understanding. We in America have lately had a convention for framing a new constitution. Enclosed I send you the result of their deliberations. Whether it will be generally acceptable and carried into execution is yet to be seen ; but present appearances are in its favor.

I am always glad to hear from you, and of your welfare. I remember with pleasure the happy days we have spent together. Adieu, and believe me ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO COUNT DE BUFFON, PARIS.

DEAR SIR,

Philadelphia, November 19, 1787.

I am honored by your letter desiring to know by what means I am relieved in a disorder, with which you are also unfortunately afflicted. I have tried all the noted prescriptions for *diminishing* the stone, without perceiving any good effect. But observing temperance in eating, avoiding wine and cyder, and using daily the dumb bell, which exercises the upper part of the body without much moving the parts in contact with the stone, I think I have prevented its *increase*. As the roughness of the stone lacerates a little the neck of the bladder, I find that when the urine happens to be sharp, I have much pain in making water and frequent urgencies. For relief under this circumstance, I take, going to bed, the bigness of a pigeon's egg of jelly of blackberries : the receipt for making it is enclosed. While I continue to do this every night I am generally easy the day following,

making water pretty freely, and with long intervals. I wish most sincerely that this simple remedy may have the same happy effect with you. Perhaps currant jelly, or the jelly of apples, or of raspberries, may be equally serviceable; for I suspect the virtue of the jelly may lie principally in the boiled sugar which is in some degree candied by the boiling of the jelly. Wishing you for your own sake much more ease, and for the sake of mankind many more years, I remain with the greatest esteem and respect, dear sir, your most obedient and affectionate servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO \* \* \*.

(EXTRACT.)

Philadelphia, December 15, 1787.

I hope the disorders in Brabant and Holland may be rectified without bloodshed. But I fear the impending war with the Turks, if not prevented by prudent negotiation, may in its consequences involve great part of Europe. I confide however that France and England will preserve their present peace with each other, notwithstanding some contrary appearances: for I think they have both of them *too much sense* to go to war without an important cause, as well as *too little money* at present.

As to the projected conquest from Turkey, I apprehend that if the emperor and empress would make some use of arithmetic, and calculate what annual revenues may be expected from the country they want, should they acquire it, and then offer the grand signior a hundred times that annual revenue, to be paid down for an amicable purchase of it, it would be his interest to accept the offer, as well as theirs to make it, rather than a war for it should take place; since a war to acquire that territory and to retain it, will

cost both parties much more, perhaps ten times more, than such sum of purchase money. But the hope of glory and the ambition of princes are not subject to arithmetical calculation.

My best wishes attend you; being with great esteem, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO M. LE VEILLARD, OF PASSY.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Philadelphia, Feb. 17, 1788.

As you have so much leisure, and love writing, I cannot think you have been so long silent; you who are so good as to love me, and who know how much pleasure your letters always afford me. I therefore rather suspect you may probably have written something too freely concerning public affairs, and that your letters may be arrested in your post-office, and yourself lodged in the Bastile. You see I imagine any thing, however extravagant, rather than suppose, (as your letters too often do) that my friends forget me.

I should have proceeded in the history you mention,\* if I could well have avoided accepting the chair of president for this third and last year: to which I was again elected by the *unanimous* voice of council and general assembly in November. If I live to see this year expire I may enjoy some leisure, which I promise you to employ in the work you do me the honor to urge so earnestly.

I sent you with my last a copy of the new constitution proposed for the United States by the late

\* M *emoirs* of his own Life, to the continuance of which all his friends who knew the importance of such a history wished him anxiously to apply.

general convention. I sent one also to our excellent friend the Duke de la Rochefoucault. I attended the business of the convention faithfully for four months. Enclosed you have the last speech I made in it.\* Six states have already adopted the constitution, and there is now little doubt of its being accepted by a sufficient number to carry it into execution, if not immediately by the whole. It has however met with great opposition in some states; for we are at present a nation of politicians. And though there is a general dread of giving too much *power* to our *governors*, I think we are more in danger from too little obedience in the *governed*.

We shall, as you suppose, have imposts on trade, and custom-houses, not because other nations have them, but because we cannot at present do without them. We want to discharge our public debt occasioned by the late war. Direct taxes are not so easily levied on the scantily settled inhabitants of our wide-extended country; and what is paid in the price of merchandise is less felt by the consumer, and less the cause of complaint. When we are out of debt we may leave our trade free, for our ordinary charges of government will not be great.

Where there is a free government, and the people make their own laws by their representatives, I see no injustice in their obliging one another to take their own paper money. It is no more so than compelling a man by law to take his own note. But it is unjust to pay strangers with such money against their will. The making of paper money with such a sanction is however a folly, since, although you may

\* See MEMOIRS of HIS LIFE, Part V. p. 380, 4to ed.

by law oblige a citizen to take it for his goods, you cannot fix his prices; and his liberty of rating them as he pleases, which is the same thing as setting what value he pleases on your money, defeats your sanction.

I have been concerned to hear of the troubles in the internal government of the country I love; \* and hope some good may come out of them; and that they may end without mischief.

In your letter to my grandson you asked some questions that had an appearance as if you meditated a visit to us. Nothing in this world would give me greater pleasure than to receive and embrace here the whole family: but it is too great an happiness to be expected. This family all join with me in best wishes of every felicity to you and yours; and I remain, with unalterable and great esteem and affection, my dear friend, yours most sincerely,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA GAZETTE.  
Messrs. HALL and SELLERS,

I lately heard a remark, that on examination of the *Pennsylvania Gazette*, for fifty years, from its commencement, it appeared that during that long period scarce one libellous piece had ever appeared in it. This generally chaste conduct of your paper is much to its reputation; for it has long been the opinion of sober judicious people, that nothing is more likely to endanger the liberty of the press, than the abuse of that liberty, by employing it in personal accusation, detraction, and calumny. The excesses some of our papers have been guilty of in this par-

\* France.

ticular, have set this state in a bad light abroad, as appears by the following letter, which I wish you to publish, not merely to show your own disapprobation of the practice, but as a caution to others of the profession throughout the United States. For I have seen an European newspaper, in which the editor, who had been charged with frequently calumniating the Americans, justifies himself by saying, "that he had published nothing disgraceful to us, which he had not taken from our own printed papers." I am, &c. A. B.

DEAR FRIEND,

New York, March 30, 1788.

My gout has at length left me, after five months' painful confinement. It afforded me however the leisure to read, or hear read, all the packets of your newspapers which you so kindly sent for my amusement.

Mrs. W. has partaken of it: she likes to read the advertisements; but she remarks some kind of *inconsistency* in the announcing so many diversions for almost every evening in the week, and such quantities to be sold of expensive superfluities, fineries, and luxuries *just imported*, in a country that at the same time fills its papers with complaints of *hard times*, and want of money. I tell her that such complaints are common to all times and all countries, and were made even in Solomon's time, when, as we are told, silver was as plenty in Jerusalem as the stones in the street, and yet even then there were people that grumbled, so as to incur this censure from that knowing prince: *Say not thou that the former times were better than these; for thou dost not inquire rightly concerning that matter.*

But the *inconsistence* that strikes me the most is that between the name of your city, *Philadelphia*, (*brotherly love*) and the spirit of rancour, malice, and *hatred*, that breathes in its newspapers! For I learn from those papers that your state is divided into parties; that each party ascribes all the public operations of the other to vicious motives; that they do not even suspect one another of the smallest degree of honesty; that the antifederalists are such, merely from the fear of losing power, places, or emoluments, which they have in possession or in expectation; that the federalists are a set of *conspirators*, who aim at establishing a tyranny over the persons and property of their countrymen, and to live in splendor on the plunder of the people. I learn too that your justices of the peace, though chosen by their neighbors, make a villanous trade of their office, and promote discord to augment fees, and fleece their electors; and that this would not be mended by placing the choice in the executive council, who with interested or party views are continually making as improper appointments; witness a "*petty fiddler, sycophant and scoundrel*" appointed judge of the admiralty; "*an old woman and fomenter of sedition*" to be another of the judges, and "*a Jeffries*" chief justice, &c. &c.; with "*two harpies*," the comptroller and naval officers to prey upon the merchants, and deprive them of their property by force of arms, &c. I am informed also by these papers, that your general assembly, though the annual choice of the people, shows no regard to their rights, but from sinister views or ignorance make laws in direct violation of the constitution, to divest the inhabitants of their property and give it to strangers and intruders; and

that the council, either fearing the resentment of their constituents, or plotting to enslave them, had projected to disarm them, and given orders for that purpose ; and finally, that your president, the unanimous joint choice of the council and assembly, is "*an old rogue*," who gave his assent to the federal constitution merely to avoid refunding money he had purloined from the United States. There is indeed a good deal of manifest *inconsistency* in all this, and yet a stranger seeing it in your own prints, though he does not believe it all, may probably believe enough of it to conclude that Pennsylvania is peopled by a set of the most unprincipled, wicked, rascally, and quarrelsome scoundrels upon the face of the globe. I have sometimes indeed suspected, that those papers are the manufacture of foreign enemies among you, who write with the view of disgracing your country, and making you appear contemptible and detestable all the world over: but then I wonder at the indiscretion of your printers in publishing such writings! There is however one of your *inconsistencies* that consoles me a little, which is, that though *living*, you give one another the characters of devils; *dead* you are all angels! It is delightful when any of you die, to read what good husbands, good fathers, good friends, good citizens, and good Christians you were, concluding with a scrap of poetry that places you, with certainty, every one in heaven. So that I think Pennsylvania a good country *to die in*, though a very bad one to live in.

TO M. LE VEILLARD.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Philadelphia, April 22, 1788.

I received but a few days since your favor of



November 30, 1787, in which you continue to urge me to finish the memoirs. My three years of service will expire in October, when a new president must be chosen ; and I had the project of retiring then to my grandson's estate in New Jersey, where I might be free from the interruption of visits, in order to complete that work for your satisfaction ; for in this city my time is so cut to pieces by friends and strangers, that I have sometimes envied the prisoners in the Bastile : but considering now the little remnant of life I have left, the accidents that may happen between this and October, and your earnest desire, I have come to a resolution to proceed in that work to-morrow, and continue it daily till finished, which, if my health permits, may be in the course of the ensuing summer. As it goes on I will have a copy made for you, and you may expect to receive a part by the next packet.

It is very possible, as you suppose, that all the articles of the proposed new government will not remain unchanged after the first meeting of the congress. I am of opinion with you, that the *two* chambers were not necessary, and I disliked some other articles that are in, and wished for some that are not in the proposed plan ; I nevertheless hope it may be adopted, though I should have nothing to do with the execution of it, being determined to quit all public business with my present employment. At 83 one certainly has a right to *ambition* repose.

We are not ignorant that the duties paid at the custom-house on the importation of foreign goods are finally reimbursed by the consumer, but we impose them as the easiest way of levying a tax from those consumers. If our new country was as closely in-

habited as your old one, we might without much difficulty, collect a land-tax that would be sufficient for all purposes : but where farms are five or six miles distant from each other, as they are in a great part of our country, the going of the collectors from house to house to demand the taxes, and being obliged to call more than once for the same tax, makes the trouble of collecting in many cases exceed the value of the sum collected. Things that are practicable in one country are not always so in another, where circumstances differ. Our duties are however so small as to give little temptation to smuggling.

Believe me ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MADAME LAVOISIER.

Philadelphia, Oct. 23, 1788.

I have a long time been disabled from writing to my dear friend by a severe fit of the gout, or I should sooner have returned my thanks for her very kind present of the portrait, which she has herself done me the honor to make of me. It is allowed by those who have seen it, to have great merit as a picture in every respect ; but what particularly endears it to me is the hand that drew it. Our English enemies, when they were in possession of this city and my house, made a prisoner of my portrait, and carried it off with them, leaving that of its companion, my wife, by itself, a kind of widow. You have replaced the husband, and the lady seems to smile as well pleased.

It is true, as you observe, that I enjoy here every thing that a reasonable mind can desire, a sufficiency

of income, a comfortable habitation of my own building, having all the conveniences I could imagine; a dutiful and affectionate daughter to nurse and take care of me, a number of promising grand-children, some old friends still remaining to converse with, and more respect, distinction, and public honors than I can possibly merit; these are the blessings of God, and depend on his continued goodness: yet all do not make me forget Paris, and the nine years' happiness I enjoyed there, in the sweet society of a people whose conversation is instructive, whose manners are highly pleasing, and who above all the nations of the world, have in the greatest perfection the art of making themselves beloved by strangers. And now, even in my sleep, I find, that the scenes of all my pleasant dreams are laid in that city, or in its neighborhood.

Please to present my thanks to M. Lavoisier for the *Nomenclature Chimique* he has been so good as to send me, (it must be a very useful book) and assure him of my great and sincere esteem and attachment. My best wishes attend you both; and I think I cannot wish you and him greater happiness than a long continuance of the connexion.

With great regard and affection, I have the honor to be, my dear friend, your most obliged and most obedient humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO DR. INGENHAUSZ.

(EXTRACT.)

October 24, 1788.

You have always been kind enough to interest yourself in what relates to my health: I ought therefore to acquaint you with what appears to me something curious respecting it: you may remember

the cutaneous malady I formerly complained of, and for which you and Dr. Pringle favored me with prescriptions and advice. It vexed me near fourteen years, and was the beginning of this year as bad as ever, covering almost my whole body, except my face and hands, when a fit of the gout came on, without very much pain, but a swelling in both feet, which at last appeared also in both knees; and then in my hands. As these swellings increased and extended, the other malady diminished, and at length disappeared entirely. Those swellings have some time since begun to fall, and are now almost gone; perhaps the cutaneous may return, or perhaps it is worn out. I may hereafter let you know what happens. I am on the whole much weaker than when it began to leave me. But possibly that may be the effect of age, for I am now near 83, the age of commencing decrepitude.

I grieve at the wars Europe is engaged in, and wish they were ended; for I fear even the victors will be losers. I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. Our public affairs are drawing towards a settlement. I have served out the three years' term of my presidentship, limited by the constitution; and being determined to engage no more in public business, I hope, if health permits, to be a better correspondent. We have no philosophical news here at present, except that a boat moved by a steam engine, rows itself against tide in our river, and it is apprehended the construction may be so simplified and improved as to become generally useful.

TO B. VAUGHAN, ESQ.

(EXTRACT.)

October 24, 1788.

Having now finished my term in the presidency, and resolving to engage no more in public affairs, I hope to be a better correspondent for the little time I have to live. I am recovering from a long continued gout, and am diligently employed in writing the history of my life, to the doing of which the persuasions contained in your letter of January 31, 1783,\* have not a little contributed. I am now in the year 1756, just before I was sent to England. To shorten the work, as well as for other reasons, I omit all facts and transactions that may not have a tendency to benefit the young reader, by showing him from my example, and my success in emerging from poverty, and acquiring some degree of wealth, power, and reputation, the advantages of certain modes of conduct which I observed, and of avoiding the errors which were prejudicial to me. If a writer can judge properly of his own work, I fancy on reading over what is already done, that the book may be found entertaining, interesting, and useful, more so than I expected when I began it. If my present state of health continues, I hope to finish it this winter: when done you shall have a manuscript copy of it, that I may obtain from your judgment and friendship such remarks as may contribute to its improvement.

The violence of our party debates about the new constitution seems much abated, indeed almost extinct, and we are getting fast into good order. I

\* See MEMOIRS OF THE LIFE, Part II. p. 50, 4to ed. Part III. 8vo ed.

kept out of those disputes pretty well, having wrote only one little piece, which I send you enclosed.

I regret the immense quantity of misery brought upon mankind by this Turkish war; and I am afraid the king of Sweden may burn his fingers by attacking Russia. When will princes learn arithmetic enough to calculate if they want pieces of one another's territory, how much cheaper it would be to buy them, than to make war for them, even though they were to give an hundred years' purchase? But if glory cannot be valued, and therefore the wars for it cannot be subject to arithmetical calculation so as to show their advantage or disadvantage, at least wars for trade, which have gain for their object, may be proper subjects for such computation; and a trading nation as well as a single trader ought to calculate the probabilities of profit and loss, before engaging in any considerable adventure. This however nations seldom do, and we have had frequent instances of their spending more money in wars for acquiring or securing branches of commerce, than an hundred years' profit or the full enjoyment of them can compensate.

Remember me affectionately to good Dr. Price and to the honest heretic Dr. Priestley. I do not call him *honest* by way of distinction; for I think all the heretics I have known have been virtuous men. They have the virtue of fortitude or they would not venture to own their heresy; and they cannot afford to be deficient in any of the other virtues, as that would give advantage to their many enemies; and they have not, like orthodox sinners, such a number of friends to excuse or justify them. Do not, however, mistake me. It is not to my good friend's

heresy that I impute his honesty. On the contrary, 'tis his honesty that has brought upon him the character of heretic. I am ever, my dear friend, yours sincerely,  
B. FRANKLIN.

TO MRS. PARTRIDGE.

(EXTRACT.)

Philadelphia, Nov. 26, 1788.

You tell me our poor friend Ben Kent is gone—I hope to the regions of the blessed; or at least to some place where souls are prepared for those regions! I found my hope on this, that though not so orthodox as you and I, he was an honest man, and had his virtues. If he had any hypocrisy, it was of that inverted kind, with which a man is not so bad as he seems to be. And with regard to future bliss, I cannot help imagining that multitudes of the zealously orthodox of different sects, who at the last day may flock together, in hopes of seeing each other damned, will be disappointed, and obliged to rest content with their own salvation. Yours, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MRS. MECOM,\* BOSTON.

(EXTRACT.)

Philadelphia, Nov. 26, 1788.

I never see any Boston newspapers. You mention there being often something in them to do me honor. I am obliged to them. On the other hand, some of our papers here are endeavoring to disgrace me. I have long been accustomed to receive more blame as well as more praise than I have deserved. 'Tis the lot of every public man; and I leave one account to balance the other.

\* Dr. Franklin's sister.

As you observe, there was no *d—n your souls* in the story of the poker when I told it. The late dresser of it was probably the same, or perhaps of kin to him, who in relating a dispute that happened between Queen Anne and the Archbishop of Canterbury concerning a vacant mitre, which the queen was for bestowing on a person the archbishop thought unworthy, made both the queen and archbishop swear three or four thumping oaths in every sentence of the discussion ; and the archbishop at last gained his point. One present at the tale being surprised, said, ‘ But did the queen and archbishop swear so at one another ? ’ ‘ O ! no, no, said the relator, that is only my way of telling the story.’ Yours, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MR. SMALL.

DEAR FRIEND,

Philadelphia, Feb. 17, 1789.

I have just received your kind letter of Nov. 29, and am much obliged by your friendly attention in sending me the receipt, which on occasion I may make trial of ; but the stone I have being a large one, as I find by the weight it falls with when I turn in bed, I have no hope of its being dissoluble by any medicine ; and having been for some time past pretty free from pain, I am afraid of tampering. I congratulate you on the escape you had by voiding the one you mention, that was as big as a kidney bean ; had it been retained it might soon have become too large to pass, and proved the cause of much pain at times, as mine has been to me.

Having served my time of three years as president, I have now renounced all public business, and enjoy the *otium cum dignitate*. My friends indulge me with



their frequent visits, which I have now leisure to receive and enjoy. The Philosophical Society, and the Society for Political Inquiries meet at my house, which I have enlarged by additional building, that affords me a large room for those meetings, another over it for my library, now very considerable, and over all some lodging rooms. I have seven promising grand-children by my daughter, who play with and amuse me, and she is a kind attentive nurse to me when I am at any time indisposed; so that I pass my time as agreeably as at my age (83) a man may well expect, and have little to wish for, except a more easy exit than my malady seems to threaten.

The deafness you complain of gives me concern, as if great, it must diminish considerably your pleasure in conversation. If moderate, you may remedy it easily and readily, by putting your thumb and fingers behind your ear, pressing it outwards, and enlarging it as it were, with the hollow of your hand. By an exact experiment I found that I could hear the tick of a watch at forty-five feet distance by this means, which was barely audible at twenty feet without it. The experiment was made at midnight when the house was still.

I am glad you have sent those directions respecting ventilation to the Edinburgh Society. I hope you have added an account of the experience you had of it in Minorca. If they do not print your paper send it to me, and it shall be in the third volume which we are about to publish of our transactions.

Mrs. Hewson joins with us in best wishes for your health and happiness. Her eldest son has gone through his studies at our college, and takes his degree. The youngest is still there, and will be

graduated this summer. My grandson presents his respects; and I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

You never mention the receipt of any letters from me. I wish to know if they come to hand, particularly my last enclosing the *apologue*.<sup>\*</sup> You mention some of my old friends being dead, but not their names.

TO MRS. GREENE.

DEAR FRIEND,

Philadelphia, March 2, 1789.

Having now done with public affairs, which have hitherto taken up so much of my time, I shall endeavor to enjoy, during the small remainder of life that is left to me, some of the pleasures of conversing with my old friends by writing, since their distance prevents my hope of seeing them again.

I received one of the bags of sweet corn you was so good as to send me a long time since, but the other never came to hand; even the letter mentioning it, though dated December 10, 1787, has been above a year on its way, for I received it but about two weeks since from Baltimore in Maryland. The corn I did receive was excellent, and gave me great pleasure. Accept my hearty thanks.

I am, as you suppose in the above-mentioned old letter, much pleased to hear that my young friend Ray is "smart in the farming way," and makes such substantial fences. I think agriculture the most honorable of all employments, being the most independent: the farmer has no need of popular favor, nor the favor of the great, the success of his crops depending only on the blessing of God upon his

\* See WRITINGS, Part III. Sect. 3.

honest industry. I congratulate your good spouse, that he, as well as myself, is now free from public cares, and that he can bend his whole attention to his farming, which will afford him both profit and pleasure; a business which nobody knows better how to manage with advantage. I am too old to follow printing again myself, but loving the business, I have brought up my grandson Benjamin to it, and have built and furnished a printing-house for him, which he now manages under my eye. I have great pleasure in the rest of my grand-children, who are now in number eight, and all promising; the youngest only six months old, but shows signs of great goodness. My friends here are numerous, and I enjoy as much of their conversation as I can reasonably wish; and I have as much health and cheerfulness as can well be expected at my age, now eighty-three. Hitherto this long life has been tolerably happy; so that if I were allowed to live it over again, I should make no objection, only wishing for leave to do, what authors do in a second edition of their works, correct some of my *errata*. Among the felicities of my life I reckon your friendship, which I shall remember with pleasure as long as that life lasts; being ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MISS CATHERINE LOUISA SHIPLEY.\*

Philadelphia, April 27, 1789.

It is only a few days since the kind letter of my dear young friend, dated December 24, came to my hands. I had before, in the public papers, met

\* A daughter of the bishop of St. Asaph.

with the afflicting news that letter contained. That excellent man has then left us!—his departure is a loss not to his family and friends only, but to his nation, and to the world; for he was intent on doing good, had wisdom to devise the means, and talents to promote them. His sermon before the Society for Propagating the Gospel, and “*his speech intended to be spoken,*” are proofs of his ability as well as his humanity. Had his counsels in those pieces been attended to by the ministers, how much bloodshed might have been prevented, and how much expense and disgrace to the nation avoided!

Your reflections on the constant calmness and composure attending his death are very sensible. Such instances seem to show, that the good sometimes enjoy in dying a foretaste of the happy state they are about to enter.

According to the course of years I should have quitted this world long before him: I shall however not be long in following. I am now in my eighty-fourth year, and the last year has considerably enfeebled me; so that I hardly expect to remain another. You will then, my dear friend, consider this as probably the last line to be received from me, and as a taking leave. Present my best and most sincere respects to your good mother, and love to the rest of the family, to whom I wish all happiness; and believe me to be, while I *do* live, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE REV. DR. PRICE.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND, Philadelphia, May 31, 1789.

I lately received your kind letter, enclosing one from Miss Kitty Shipley, informing me of the good

bishop's decease, which afflicted me greatly. My friends drop off one after another, when my age and infirmities prevent my making new ones; and if I still retained the necessary activity and ability, I hardly see among the existing generation where I could make them of equal goodness. So that the longer I live I must expect to be the more wretched. As we draw nearer the conclusion of life, nature furnishes with more helps to wean us from it, among which, one of the most powerful is the loss of dear friends.

I send you with this the two volumes of our transactions, as I forget whether you had the first before. If you had, you will please to give this to the French ambassador, requesting his conveyance of it to the good Duke de la Rochefoucault.

My best wishes attend you; being ever, with sincere and great esteem, my dear friend, yours  
most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO B. VAUGHAN, ESQ.

MY DEAREST FRIEND,

Philadelphia, June 3, 1789.

I received your kind letter of March 4, and wish I may be able to complete what you so earnestly desire, the memoirs of my life. But of late I am so interrupted by extreme pain, which obliges me to have recourse to opium, that between the effects of both, I have but little time in which I can write any thing. My grandson, however, is copying what is done, which will be sent to you for your opinion by the next vessel; and not merely for your advice; for I find it a difficult task to speak decently and properly of one's own conduct; and I feel the want

of a judicious friend to encourage me in scratching out.

I have condoled sincerely with the Bishop of St. Asaph's family. He was an excellent man. Losing our friends thus, one by one, is the tax we pay for long living ; and it is indeed a heavy one !

I have not seen the king of Prussia's posthumous works ; what you mention makes me desirous to have them. Please to mention it to your brother William, and that I request he would add them to the books I have desired him to buy for me.

Our new government is now in train, and seems to promise well. But events are in the hand of God ! I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MR. WRIGHT, LONDON.

DEAR FRIEND,

Philadelphia, Nov. 4, 1789.

I received your kind letter of July 31st, which gave me great pleasure, as it informed me of the welfare both of yourself and your good lady, to whom please to present my respects. I thank you for the epistle of your yearly meeting, and for the card (a specimen of printing) which was enclosed.

We have now had one session of congress, which was conducted under our new constitution, and with as much general satisfaction as could reasonably be expected. I wish the struggle in France may end as happily for that nation. We are now in the full enjoyment of our new government for *eleven* of the states, and it is generally thought that North Carolina is about to join it. Rhode Island will probably take longer time for consideration. We have had a most plentiful year for the fruits of the earth, and

our people seem to be recovering fast from the extravagance and idle habits which the war had introduced ; and to engage seriously in the contrary habits of temperance, frugality, and industry, which give the most pleasing prospect of future national felicity. Your merchants, however, are, I think, imprudent in crowding in upon us such quantities of goods for sale here, which are not written for by ours, and are beyond the faculties of this country to consume, in any reasonable time. This surplus of goods is, therefore, to raise present money, sent to the vendues, or auction-houses, of which we have six or seven in and near this city, where they are sold frequently for less than prime cost, to the great loss of the indiscreet adventurers. Our newspapers are doubtless to be seen at your coffee-houses near the Exchange : in their advertisements you may observe the constancy and quantity of this kind of sales, as well as the quantity of goods imported by our regular traders. I see in your English newspapers frequent mention of our being out of credit with you ; to us it appears that we have abundantly too much, and that your exporting merchants are rather out of their senses.

I wish success to your endeavors for obtaining an abolition of the slave trade. The epistle from your yearly meeting for the year 1758, was not the *first sowing* of the good seed you mention ; for I find by an old pamphlet in my possession, that GEORGE KEITH, near an hundred years since, wrote a paper against the practice, said to be “ given forth by the appointment of the meeting held by him, at Philip James’s house, in the city of Philadelphia, about the year 1693 ;” wherein a strict charge was given to

friends, "that they should set their negroes at liberty after some reasonable time of service," &c. &c. And about the year 1728, or 29, I myself printed a book for Ralph Sandysford, another of your friends in this city, against keeping negroes in slavery; two editions of which he distributed gratis. And about the year 1736 I printed another book on the same subject for Benjamin Lay, who also professed being one of your friends, and he distributed the books chiefly among them. By these instances it appears that the seed was indeed sown in the good ground of your profession, (though much earlier than the time you mention) and its springing up to effect at last, though so late, is some confirmation of Lord Bacon's observation, that *a good motion never dies*: and may encourage us in making such; though hopeless of their taking immediate effect.

I doubt whether I shall be able to finish my memoirs, and if I finish them whether they will be proper for publication: you seem to have too high an opinion of them, and to expect too much from them.

I think you are right in preferring a mixed form of government for your country, under its present circumstances; and if it were possible for you to reduce the enormous salaries and emoluments of great offices (which are at bottom the source of your violent factions) that form might be conducted more quietly and happily: but I am afraid that none of your factions, when they get uppermost, will ever have virtue enough to reduce those salaries and emoluments, but will rather choose to enjoy them. I am, my dear friend, yours affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.



TO DR. RUSH.

Philadelphia, [without date, but supposed to be in 1789.]

MY DEAR FRIEND,

During our long acquaintance you have shown many instances of your regard for me, yet I must now desire you to add one more to the number, which is, that if you publish your ingenious discourse on the *moral sense*, you will totally omit and suppress that most extravagant encomium on your friend Franklin, which hurt me exceedingly in the unexpected hearing, and will mortify me beyond conception, if it should appear from the press. Confiding in your compliance with this earnest request, I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO SAMUEL MORE, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

Philadelphia, Nov. 5, 1789.

I am obliged by your kind inquiries after my health, which is still tolerably good, the stone excepted; my constitution being such as, if it were not for that malady, might have held out some years longer.

I hope the fire of liberty, which you mention as spreading itself over Europe, will act upon the inestimable rights of man, as common fire does upon gold; purify without destroying them; so that a lover of liberty may find a *country* in any part of Christendom!

I see with pleasure in the public prints, that our society\* is still kept up and flourishes. I was an early member; for when Mr. Shipley sent me a list

\* The London society for promoting arts, manufactures, and commerce, of which Mr. More was secretary.

of the subscribers, they were but seventy; and though I had no expectation then of ever going to England, and acting with them, I sent a contribution of twenty guineas; in consideration of which the society were afterwards pleased to consider me a member.

I wish to the exertions of your manufacturers, who are generally excellent, and to the spirit and enterprise of your merchants, who are famed for fair and honorable dealing, all the success they merit in promoting the prosperity of your country.

I am glad our friend Small enjoys so much health, and his faculties so perfectly, as I perceive he does by his letters. I know not whether he is yet returned from his visit to Scotland, and therefore give you the trouble of the enclosed. My best wishes attend you; being ever, dear sir, your most obedient servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MR. SMALL.

DEAR SIR,

Philadelphia, Nov. 5, 1789.

I received your several favors of April 23, May 9, and June 2, together with the manuscript concerning ventilation, which will be inserted in our next volume.

I have long been of your opinion, that your legal provision for the poor is a very great evil, operating as it does to the encouragement of idleness. We have followed your example, and begin now to see our error; and I hope shall reform it. I find by your letters that every man has patience enough to bear calmly and coolly the injuries done to other people: you have perfectly forgiven the royalists, and you seem to wonder that we should still retain any resentment against them for their joining with

the savages to burn our houses, and murder and scalp our friends, our wives, and our children. I forget who it was that said, “ we are commanded to forgive our enemies, but we are no where commanded to forgive our friends :” certain it is, however, that atrocious injuries done to us by our friends are naturally more deeply resented than the same done by enemies. They have left us to live under the government of their king in England and Nova Scotia. We do not miss them, nor wish their return ; nor do we envy them their present happiness.—The accounts you give me of the great prospects you have respecting your manufactures, agriculture, and commerce, are pleasing to me, for I still love England, and wish it prosperity.— You tell me that the government of France is abundantly punished for its treachery to England in assisting us ; you might also have remarked that the government of England had been punished for its treachery to France, in assisting the Corsicans, and in seizing her ships in time of full peace, without any previous declaration of war. I believe governments are pretty near equal in honesty, and cannot with much propriety praise their own in preference to that of their neighbors.

You do me too much honor in naming me with *Timoleon*. I am like him only in retiring from my public labors ; which indeed my stone, and other infirmities of age, have made indispensably necessary.

I hope you are by this time returned from your visit to your native country, and that the journey has given a firmer consistence to your health.

Mr. Penn’s property in this country, which you inquire about, is still immensely great ; and I under-

stand he has received ample compensation in England for the part he lost.

I think you have made a happy choice of rural amusements: the protection of the bees, and the destruction of the hop insect. I wish success to your experiments, and shall be glad to hear the result. Your theory of insects appears the most ingenious and plausible of any that have hitherto been proposed by philosophers.

Our new constitution is now established with *eleven* states, and the accession of a twelfth is soon expected. We have had one session of congress under it, which was conducted with remarkable prudence, and a good deal of unanimity. Our late harvests were plentiful, and our produce still fetches a good price, through an abundant foreign demand, and the flourishing state of our commerce. I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MR. LE ROY, OF PARIS.\*

Philadelphia, Nov. 13, 1789.

'Tis now more than a year since I have heard from my dear friend Le Roy. What can be the reason? Are you still living? or have the mob of Paris mistaken the head of a monopoliser of knowledge for a monopoliser of corn, and paraded it about the streets upon a pole?

Great part of the news we have had from Paris, for near a year past, has been very afflicting. I sincerely wish and pray it may all end well and happy, both for the king and the nation. The voice

\* A member of the French Academy of Sciences.

of *philosophy* I apprehend can hardly be heard among those tumults. If any thing material in that way had occurred, I am persuaded you would have acquainted me with it. However, pray let me hear from you a little oftener; for though the distance is great, and the means of conveying letters not very regular, a year's silence between friends must needs give uneasiness.

Our new constitution is now established, and has an appearance that promises permanency: but in this world nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes!

My health continues much as it has been for some time, except that I grow thinner and weaker; so that I cannot expect to hold out much longer.

My respects to your good brother, and to our friends of the academy, which always has my best wishes for its prosperity and glory. Adieu, my dear friend, and believe me ever yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO DAVID HARTLEY, ESQ.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND, Philadelphia, Dec. 4, 1789.

Your kind condolences, on the painful state of my health, are very obliging. I am thankful to God, however, that among the numerous ills human life is subject to, one only of any importance is fallen to my lot; and that so late as almost to insure that it can be but of short duration.

The convulsions in France are attended with some disagreeable circumstances; but if by the struggle she obtains and secures for the nation its future liberty and a good constitution, a few years' enjoyment of those blessings will amply repair all the

damages their acquisition may have occasioned. God grant that not only the love of liberty, but a thorough knowledge of the rights of man, may pervade all the nations of the earth, so that a philosopher may set his foot any where on its surface, and say, this is my country!—Your wishes for a cordial and perpetual friendship between Britain and her ancient colonies, are manifested continually in every one of your letters to me; something of my disposition on the same subject may appear to you in casting your eye over the enclosed paper.\* I do not by this opportunity send you any of our gazettes; because the postage from Liverpool would be more than they are worth. I can now only add my best wishes of every kind of felicity for the three amiable Hartleys, to whom I have the honour of being an affectionate friend and most obedient humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MRS. MECOM, AT BOSTON.

DEAR SISTER,

Philadelphia, Dec. 17, 1789.

You tell me you are desired by an acquaintance to ask my opinion whether the general circumstances mentioned in the history of Baron Trenck are founded in fact? to which I can only answer, that of the greatest part of those circumstances, the scene being laid in Germany, I must consequently be very ignorant; but of what he says, as having passed in France, between the ministers of that country, himself, and me, I can speak positively that it is *founded in falsehood*, and that the fact can only serve to confound, as I never saw him in that country, nor ever

\* Uncertain what paper.

knew or heard of him any where, till I met with the above-mentioned history in print, in the German language, in which he ventured to relate it as a fact, that I had, with those ministers, solicited him to enter into the American service. A translation of that book into French has since been printed; but the translator has omitted that pretended fact, probably from an apprehension, that its being in that country known not to be true, might hurt the credit and sale of the translation.

I thank you for the sermon on sacred music; I have read it with pleasure. I think it a very ingenious composition. You will say this is natural enough, if you read what I have formerly written on the same subject in one of my printed letters, wherein you will find a perfect agreement of sentiment respecting the complex music, of late, in my opinion, too much in vogue; it being only pleasing to learned ears, who can be delighted with the difficulty of execution instead of harmony and melody. Your affectionate brother,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO NOAH WEBSTER, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

Philadelphia, Dec. 26, 1789.

I received some time since your "*Dissertations on the English Language*." The book was not accompanied by any letter or message, informing me to whom I am obliged for it; but I suppose it is to yourself. It is an excellent work, and will be greatly useful in turning the thoughts of our countrymen to correct writing. Please to accept my thanks for the great honor you have done me in its dedication. I ought to have made this acknowledgment sooner, but much indisposition prevented me.

I cannot but applaud your zeal for preserving the purity of our language, both in its expressions and pronunciation, and in correcting the popular errors several of our states are continually falling into with respect to both. Give me leave to mention some of them, though possibly they may have already occurred to you. I wish however in some future publication of yours you would set a discountenancing mark upon them. The first I remember is the word *improved*.<sup>\*</sup> When I left New England in the year 1723, this word had never been used among us as far as I know, but in the sense of *ameliorated*, or made better, except once in a very old book of Dr. Mather's, intitled "*Remarkable Providences*." As that eminent man wrote a very obscure hand, I remember that when I read that word in his book, instead of the word *employed*, I conjectured it was an error of the printer, who had mistaken a too short *l* in the writing for an *r*, and a *y* with too short a tail for a *v*; whereby *employed* was converted into *improved*. But when I returned to Boston in 1733, I found this change had obtained favor, and was then become common; for I met with it often in perusing the newspapers, where it frequently made an appearance rather ridiculous. Such, for instance, as

<sup>\*</sup> To IMPROVE, to occupy, make use of, employ. This word in the *first* sense, is in constant use in all parts of New England: but in the *second* sense (when applied to *persons*, as in the following example,) it is not so common: "In actions of trespass against several defendants, the plaintiff may, after issue is *closed*, strike out any of them for the purpose of *improving* them as witnesses." *Swift's System of the Laws of Connecticut*, vol. ii. p. 238. [*Pickering's Vocabulary of Words peculiar to the United States of America*. Boston, 1816.]



the advertisement of a country-house to be sold, which had been many years *improved* as a tavern; and in the character of a deceased country-gentleman, that he had been for more than thirty years *improved* as a justice of the peace. This use of the word *improved* is peculiar to New England, and not to be met with among any other speakers of English, either on this or the other side of the water.\*

During my late absence in France, I find that several other new words have been introduced into our parliamentary language; for example, I find a verb formed from the substantive *notice*. *I should not have NOTICED this were it not that the gentleman, &c.*† Also another verb from the substantive *advocate*; *the gentleman who ADVOCATES or has ADVOCATED that motion, &c.*‡ Another from the substan-

\* According to PICKERING, this word IMPROVE was used in some parts of *New England* before *Mather's* time, though possibly not in *Boston*.

† This is not an *Americanism*: it is a modern word, and is not in Johnson's dictionary. *Mason* says, it is "a word imported into English conversation from *Ireland*;" but it is now used in England, both in conversation and in writing: "This work, which we really thought we had *noticed* long ago." *British Critic*, vol. xxxiv. p. 537. "The fourth, which we lately *noticed*, &c." vol. xxxv. p. 18.

It is to be found in *Ashe's English Dictionary*, where it is said to be "*not much used*:" but that work was published forty years ago.

NOTICEABLE is considered as another *Americanism*. "The moon's limb exhibited very little of that rough or serrated appearance, which was so *noticeable* in 1806." *Memoirs of the American Acad.* vol. iii. p. 248. Mr. Webster has admitted it into his dictionary; but it is not in the English ones. [*Pickering's Vocabulary*.]

‡ This verb was used by *Milton*, (see Todd's edition of Johnson's Dictionary,) and also by *Burke* in one of his speeches in 1782. It

tive *progress*, the most awkward and abominable of the three; *the committee having PROGRESSED,\* resolved to adjourn*. The word *opposed*, though not a new word, I find used in a new manner, as *the gentlemen who are OPPOSED to this measure;—to which I have also myself always been OPPOSED.†* If you should happen to be of my opinion, with respect to these innovations, you will use your authority in reprobating them.‡

The Latin language, long the vehicle used in distributing knowledge among the different nations of Europe, is daily more and more neglected; and one of the modern tongues, viz. the French, seems in point of universality to have supplied its place: it is

has since been generally adopted in England, and frequently employed in the British parliament. The substantive *AMBITION*, is also sometimes used as a verb; as I now only *ambition* repose, &c.

\* This is an obsolete English word, but which was never heard in America before the revolution. It has had an extraordinary currency there for the last thirty years, notwithstanding it has been condemned by the best English and American writers. It is true that *some* authorities may be found for it; and it is accordingly in *Johnson's* and other dictionaries: but Johnson has noted it as "*not used*." It seems also that the accent was formerly placed on the *first* syllable, and not (as the Americans pronounce it) on the *last*.

"Let me wipe off this honorable dew,  
That silverly doth *prôgress* on thy cheeks."

[*Pickering's Vocabulary.*]

† Sometimes used by Englishmen: "To which Mr. Overton is as much *opposed* as he is himself." [*Christian Observer*, vol. iii. p. 692.]

‡ Several other words, or the sense in which they are used, might be mentioned as peculiar to the United States of America: such as, To *compromit*, (to commit, expose, hazard.) To *conflagrate*, (to set fire to.) *Episcopalians*, (members of the Church of England.) *Influentia*, (having influence.) *Lengthy*, (prolix, protracted, diffuse.) To *locate*, (to place, to survey.)—*Cum multis aliis.*

spoken in all the courts of Europe ; and most of the literati, those even who do not speak it, have acquired knowledge enough of it to enable them easily to read the books that are written in it. This gives a considerable advantage to that nation : it enables its authors to inculcate and spread throughout other nations such sentiments and opinions on important points as are most conducive to its interests, or which may contribute to its reputation by promoting the common interests of mankind. It is perhaps owing to its being written in French, that Voltaire's Treatise on Toleration has had so sudden and so great an effect on the bigotry of Europe as almost entirely to disarm it. The general use of the French language has likewise a very advantageous effect on the profits of the bookselling branch of commerce, it being well known that the more copies can be sold that are struck off from one composition of types, the profits increase in a much greater proportion than they do in making a great number of pieces in any other kind of manufacture. And at present there is no capital town in Europe without a French bookseller's shop corresponding with Paris. Our English bids fair to obtain the second place. The great body of excellent printed sermons in our language, and the freedom of our writings on political subjects, have induced a number of divines of different sects and nations, as well as gentlemen concerned in public affairs, to study it ; so far at least as to read it. And if we were to endeavor the facilitating its progress, the study of our tongue might become much more general. Those who have employed some parts of their time in learning a new language, have frequently observed, that while their acquaintance with

it was imperfect, difficulties, small in themselves, operated as great ones in obstructing their progress. A book, for example, ill printed, or a pronunciation in speaking, not well articulated, would render a sentence unintelligible, which from a clear print, or a distinct speaker, would have been immediately comprehended. If therefore we would have the benefit of seeing our language more generally known among mankind, we should endeavor to remove all the difficulties, however small, that discourage the learning it. But I am sorry to observe that of late years those difficulties, instead of being diminished, have been augmented. In examining the English books that were printed between the Restoration and the accession of George the Second, we may observe, that all *substantives* were begun with a capital, in which we imitated our mother-tongue the German ; this was more particularly useful to those who were not well acquainted with the English ; there being such a prodigious number of our words that are both *verbs* and *substantives*, and spelt in the same manner, though often accented differently in the pronunciation. This method has, by the fancy of printers, of late years been laid aside, from an idea that suppressing the capitals shows the character to greater advantage ; those letters prominent above the line disturbing its even regular appearance. The effect of this change is so considerable, that a learned man of France, who used to read our books, though not perfectly acquainted with our language, in conversation with me on the subject of our authors, attributed the greater obscurity he found in our modern books, compared with those of the period above mentioned, to change of style for the worse in our writers ; of which mis-

take I convinced him by marking for him each *substantive* with a capital in a paragraph, which he then easily understood, though before he could not comprehend it. This shows the inconvenience of that pretended improvement. From the same fondness for an even and uniform appearance of characters in the line, the printers have of late banished also the italic types, in which words of importance to be attended to in the sense of the sentence, and words on which an emphasis should be put in reading, used to be printed. And lately another fancy has induced some printers to use the short round *s* instead of the long one, which formerly served well to distinguish a word readily by its varied appearance. Certainly the omitting this prominent letter makes the line appear more even; but renders it less immediately legible, as the paring all men's noses might smooth and level their face, but would render their physiognomies less distinguishable. Add to all these improvements *backwards*, another modern fancy that grey printing is more beautiful than black; hence the English new books are printed in so dim a character as to be read with difficulty by old eyes, unless in a very strong light and with good glasses. Whoever compares a volume of the Gentleman's Magazine, printed between the years 1731 and 1740, with one of those printed in the last ten years, will be convinced of the much greater degree of perspicuity given by black ink than by grey. Lord Chesterfield pleasantly remarked this difference to Faulkener, the printer of the Dublin Journal, who was vainly making encomiums on his own paper, as the most complete of any in the world,—“but, Mr. Faulkener,” said my Lord, “don't you think it might

be still further improved by using paper and ink not quite so near of a color ?” For all these reasons, I cannot but wish that our American printers would in their editions avoid these fancied improvements, and thereby render their works more agreeable to foreigners in Europe, to the great advantage of our book-selling commerce.

Further, to be more sensible of the advantage of clear and distinct printing, let us consider the assistance it affords in reading well aloud to an auditory. In so doing the eye generally slides forward three or four words before the voice. If the sight clearly distinguishes what the coming words are, it gives time to order the modulation of the voice to express them properly. But if they are obscurely printed or disguised, by omitting the capitals and long *s's* or otherwise, the reader is apt to modulate wrong; and finding he has done so, is obliged to go back and begin the sentence again, which lessens the pleasure of the hearers. This leads me to mention an old error in our mode of printing. We are sensible, that when a question is met with in reading, there is a proper variation to be used in the management of the voice. We have therefore a point called an interrogation, affixed to the question, in order to distinguish it. But this is absurdly placed at its end; so that the reader does not discover it till he finds he has wrongly modulated his voice, and is therefore obliged to begin again the sentence. To prevent this the Spanish printers, more sensibly, place an interrogation at the beginning as well as at the end of a question. We have another error of the same kind in printing plays, where something often occurs that is marked as spoken *aside*.

But the word *aside* is placed at the end of the speech, when it ought to precede it, as a direction to the reader, that he may govern his voice accordingly. The practice of our ladies in meeting five or six together to form a little busy party, where each is employed in some useful work while one reads to them, is so commendable in itself, that it deserves the attention of authors and printers to make it as pleasing as possible, both to the reader and hearers.

After these general observations, permit me to make one that I imagine may regard your interest. It is that *your* spelling-book is miserably printed here, so as in many places to be scarcely legible, and on wretched paper. If this is not attended to, and the new one lately advertised as coming out should be preferable in these respects, it may hurt the future sale of yours.

I congratulate you on your marriage, of which the newspapers inform me. My best wishes attend you; being with sincere esteem, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

ANSWER TO THE REVEREND PRESIDENT STILES.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

Philadelphia, March 9, 1790.

I am glad you have at length received the portrait of Governor Yale from his family, and deposited it in the college library. He was a great and good man, and had the merit of doing infinite service to your country by his munificence to that institution. The honor you propose doing me, by placing mine in the same room with his, is much too great for my deserts; but you always had a partiality for me, and to that it must be ascribed. I am however too much obliged to Yale College, the first learned

society that took notice of me and adorned me with its honors, to refuse a request that comes from it through so esteemed a friend. But I do not think any one of the portraits you mention as in my possession, worthy of the situation and company you propose to place it in. You have an excellent artist lately arrived.\* If he will undertake to make one for you, I shall cheerfully pay the expense : but he must not delay setting about it, or I may slip through his fingers ; for I am now in my 85th year, and very infirm.

I send with this a very learned work as it seems to me, on the ancient Samaritan coins, lately printed in Spain, and at least curious for the beauty of the impression. Please to accept it for your college library. I have subscribed for the encyclopedia now printing here, with the intention of presenting it to the college. I shall probably depart before the work is finished, but shall leave directions for its continuance to the end. With this you will receive some of the first numbers.

— You desire to know something of my religion. It is the first time I have been questioned upon it. But I cannot take your curiosity amiss, and shall endeavor in a few words to gratify it. Here is my creed : I believe in one God, the creator of the universe. That he governs it by his Providence. That he ought to be worshipped. That the most acceptable service we render to him is doing good to his other children. That the soul of man is immortal, and will be treated with justice in another life respecting

\* Supposed to be STUART, an eminent portrait-painter, then just returned from Europe to his native country.



its conduct in this. These I take to be the fundamental points in all sound religion, and I regard them as you do in whatever sect I meet with them.\*] As to JESUS OF NAZARETH, my opinion of whom you particularly desire, I think the system of morals and his religion, as he left them to us, the best the world ever saw or is like to see; but I apprehend it has received various corrupting changes, and I have, with most of the present dissenters in England, some doubts as to his *divinity*; though it is a question I do not dogmatise upon, having never studied it, and think it needless to busy myself with it now, when I expect soon an opportunity of knowing the truth with less trouble. I see no harm, however, in its being believed, if that belief has the good consequence, as probably it has, of making his doctrines more respected and more observed; especially as I do not perceive that the Supreme takes it amiss by distinguishing the believers, in his government of the world, with any peculiar marks of his displeasure. I shall only add respecting myself, that having experienced the goodness of that Being in conducting me prosperously through a long life, I have no doubt of its continuance in the next, though without the smallest conceit of meriting such goodness. My sentiments on this head you will see in the copy of an old letter enclosed,† which I wrote in answer to one from an old religionist whom I had relieved in a paralytic case by electricity, and who being afraid

- \* “ For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight,  
His can't be wrong whose life is in the right.”

H. POPE.

† Supposed to be the Letter to George Whitfield, dated June 6, 1753, p. 1.

I should grow proud upon it, sent me his serious, though rather impertinent, caution. I send you also the copy of another letter,\* which will show something of my disposition relating to religion. With great and sincere esteem and affection, I am, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

P.S.—Had not your college some present of books from the king of France? Please to let me know if you had an expectation given you of more, and the nature of that expectation. I have a reason for the inquiry.

I confide that you will not expose me to criticisms and censures, by publishing any part of this communication to you. I have ever let others enjoy their religious sentiments without reflecting on them for those that appeared to me unsupportable or even absurd. All sects here, and we have a great variety, have experienced my good-will in assisting them with subscriptions for the building their new places of worship; and as I have never opposed any of their doctrines, I hope to go out of the world in peace with them all.

TO \*\*\*\*\*.

DEAR SIR,

(Without date.)

I have read your manuscript with some attention. By the argument it contains against a particular Providence, though you allow a general Providence, you strike at the foundation of all religion. For without the belief of a Providence that takes cognizance of, guards and guides, and may favor particular persons, there is no motive to wor-

\* Uncertain: perhaps the following one.

ship a Deity, to fear its displeasure, or to pray for its protection. I will not enter into any discussion of your principles, though you seem to desire it. At present I shall only give you my opinion, that though your reasonings are subtle, and may prevail with some readers, you will not succeed so as to change the general sentiments of mankind on that subject; and the consequence of printing this piece will be, a great deal of odium drawn upon yourself, mischief to you, and no benefit to others. He that spits against the wind, spits in his own face. But were you to succeed, do you imagine any good would be done by it? You yourself may find it easy to live a virtuous life without the assistance afforded by religion; you having a clear perception of the advantages of virtue, and the disadvantages of vice, and possessing a strength of resolution sufficient to enable you to resist common temptations. But think how great a portion of mankind consists of weak and ignorant men and women, and of inexperienced inconsiderate youth of both sexes, who have need of the motives of religion to restrain them from vice, to support their virtue, and retain them in the practice of it till it becomes *habitual*, which is the great point for its security. And perhaps you are indebted to her originally, that is to your religious education, for the habits of virtue upon which you now justly value yourself. You might easily display your excellent talents of reasoning upon a less hazardous subject, and thereby obtain a rank with our most distinguished authors. For among us it is not necessary, as among the Hottentots, that a youth to be raised into the company of men, should prove his manhood by beating his mother. I would advise you there-

fore not to attempt unchaining the tiger, but to burn this piece before it is seen by any other person, whereby you will save yourself a great deal of mortification from the enemies it may raise against you, and perhaps a good deal of regret and repentance. If men are so wicked *with religion*, what would they be if *without it*?\* I intend this letter itself as a *proof* of my friendship, and therefore add no *professions* to it; but subscribe simply yours,

B. FRANKLIN.

\* Montesquieu says, "La religion, même fausse, est le meilleur garant que les hommes puissent avoir de la probité des hommes."  
—(*Esprit des Loix*, chap. 25, liv. 8.)

## POLITICAL CORRESPONDENCE.

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TO JOSEPH GALLOWAY, ESQ. SPEAKER OF THE  
HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA.

DEAR SIR,

London, June 13, 1767.

In my last, of May 20th, I mentioned my hopes that we should at length get over all obstructions to the repeal of the act restraining the legal tender of paper-money; but those hopes are now greatly lessened.

The ministry had agreed to the repeal, and the notion that had possessed them that they might make a revenue from paper-money, in appropriating the interest by parliament, was pretty well removed by my assuring them, that it was my opinion no colony would make money on those terms, and that the benefits arising to the commerce of this country in America, from a plentiful currency, would therefore be lost, and the repeal answer no end, if the assemblies were not allowed to appropriate the interest themselves: that the crown might get a share upon occasional requisitions, I made no doubt, by volun-

tary appropriations of the assemblies ; but they would never establish such funds as to make themselves unnecessary to government, &c. Those and other reasons that were urged, seemed to satisfy them, and we began to think all would go smoothly, and the merchants prepared their petition on which the repeal was to be founded. But in the house, when the chancellor of the exchequer had gone through his proposed American revenue, viz. by duties on glass, china ware, paper, pasteboard, colors, tea, &c. Grenville stood up, and undervalued them all as trifles ; and, said he, " I'll tell the honorable gentleman of a revenue that will produce something valuable in America : make paper money for the colonies, issue it upon loan there, take the interest, and apply it as you think proper." Mr. Townsend, finding the house listened to this, and seemed to like it, stood up again, and said, " that was a proposition of his own, which he had intended to make with the rest, but it had slipt his memory, and the gentleman, who must have heard of it, now unfairly would take advantage of that slip, and make a merit to himself of a proposition that was another's ; and as a proof of it, assured the house a bill was prepared for the purpose, and would be laid before them." This startled all our friends ; and the merchants concluded to keep back their petition for a while, till things appeared a little clearer, lest their friends in America should blame them as having furnished foundation for an act that must have been disagreeable to the colonies. I found the rest of the ministry did not like this proceeding of the chancellor's ; but as there was no going on with our scheme against his declaration ; and as he daily talked of resigning, there being

no good agreement between him and the rest, and as we found the general prejudice against the colonies so strong in the house, that any thing in the shape of a favor to them all was like to meet with great opposition, whether he was out or in, I proposed to Mr. Jackson the putting our colony foremost, as we stood in a pretty good light, and asking the favor for us alone. This he agreed might be proper in case the chancellor should go out, and undertook to bring in a bill for that purpose, provided the Philadelphia merchants would petition for it; and he wished to have such petition ready to present if an opening for it should offer. Accordingly I applied to them, and prepared a draft of a petition for them to sign, a copy of which I send you enclosed. They seemed generally for the measure; but apprehending the merchants of the other colonies, who had hitherto gone hand in hand with us in all American affairs, might take umbrage if we now separated from them, it was thought right to call a meeting of the whole to consult upon this proposal. At this meeting I represented to them, as the ground of this measure, that the colonies being generally out of favor at present, any hard clause relating to paper-money in the repealing bill, will be more easily received in parliament if the bill related to all the colonies; that Pennsylvania being in some degree of favor, might possibly alone obtain a better act than the whole could do, as it might by government be thought as good policy to show favor where there had been obedience, as resentment where there had been the reverse. That a good act obtained by Pennsylvania might another year, when the resentment against the colonies should be abated, be made

use of as a precedent, &c. &c. But after a good deal of debate, it was finally concluded not to precipitate matters, it being very dangerous, by any kind of petition, to furnish the chancellor with a horse on which he could put what saddle he thought fit: the other merchants seemed rather averse to the Pennsylvania merchants proceeding alone, but said they were certainly at liberty to do as they thought proper. The conclusion of the Pennsylvania merchants was to wait awhile, holding the separate petition ready to sign and present if a proper opening should appear this session, but otherwise to reserve it to the next, when the complexion of ministers and measures may probably be changed. And as this session now draws to a conclusion, I begin to think nothing will be farther done in it this year.

Mentioning the merchants, puts me in mind of some discourse I heard among them, that was by no means agreeable. It was said that in the opposition they gave the stamp act, and their endeavors to obtain the repeal, they had spent at their meeting, and in expresses to all parts of this country, and for a vessel to carry the joyful news to North America, and in the entertainments given our friends of both houses, &c. near 1500*l.*; that for all this, except from the little colony of Rhode Island, they had not received so much as a *thank ye*. That, on the contrary, the circular letters they had written with the best intentions to the merchants of the several colonies, containing their best and most friendly advice, were either answered with unkind reflections, or contemptuously left without answer: and that the captain of the vessel they sent express with the news, having met with misfortunes that obliged him to



travel by land through all the colonies from New Hampshire to Pennsylvania, was everywhere treated with neglect and contempt, instead of civility and hospitality; and no where with more than at Philadelphia, where, though he delivered letters to the merchants that must make him and his errand known to them, no one took the least notice of him. I own I was ashamed to hear all this, but hope there is some mistake in it. I should not have troubled you with this account, but that I think we stand in truth greatly obliged to the merchants, who are a very respectable body, and whose friendship is worth preserving, as it may greatly help us on future occasions; and therefore I wish some decent acknowledgments or thanks were sent from the assemblies of the colonies, since their correspondents have omitted it.

I have said the less of late in my letters concerning the petitions, because I hoped this summer to have an opportunity of communicating every thing *viva voce*; and there are particulars that cannot safely be trusted to paper. Perhaps I may be more determined, as to returning or staying another winter, when I receive my next letters from you and my other friends in Philadelphia.

We got the chancellor to drop his salt-duty. And the merchants trading to Portugal and Spain, he says, have made such a clamor about the intention of suffering ships to go directly with wine, fruit, and oil, from those countries to America, that he has dropped that scheme, and we are, it seems, to labor a little longer under the inconveniencies of the restraint.

It is said the bill to suspend the legislatures of

New York and Georgia, till they comply with the act of parliament for quartering soldiers, will pass this session. I fear that imprudencies on both sides may, step by step, bring on the most mischievous consequences. It is imagined here that this act will enforce immediate compliance; and if the people should be quiet, content themselves with the laws they have, and let the matter rest till in some future war the king wanting aids from them, and finding himself restrained in his legislation by the act as much as the people, shall think fit by his ministers to propose the repeal, the parliament will be greatly disappointed; and perhaps it may take this turn. I wish nothing worse may happen.

The present ministry will probably continue through this session. But their disagreement, with the total inability of Lord Chatham through sickness to do any business, must bring on some change before next winter. I wish it may be for the better, but fear the contrary.

Please to present my dutiful respects to the assembly, and believe me ever, dear sir, yours and the committee's most obedient and faithful humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO JOSEPH GALLOWAY, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

London, August 8, 1767.

The confusion among our great men still continues as much as ever, and a melancholy thing it is to consider, that instead of employing the present leisure of peace in such measures as might extend our commerce, pay off our debts, secure allies, and increase the strength and ability of the nation to support a future war, the whole seems to be wasted

in party contentions, about places of power and profit, in court intrigues and cabals, and in abusing one another.

There has lately been an attempt to make a kind of coalition of parties in a new ministry, but it fell through, and the present set is like to continue for some time longer, which I am rather pleased with, as some of those who were proposed to be introduced are professed adversaries to America, which is now made one of the distinctions of party here; those who have in the two last sessions shown a disposition to favor us, being called, by way of reproach, *Americans*; while the other adherents to Grenville and Bedford value themselves on being true to the interests of Britain, and zealous for maintaining its dignity and sovereignty over the colonies. This distinction will, it is apprehended, be carried much higher in the next session, for the political purpose of influencing the ensuing election. It is already given out that the compliance of New York in providing for the quarters, without taking notice of its being done in obedience to the act of parliament, is evasive and unsatisfactory. That it is high time to put the right and power of this country to tax the colonies out of dispute, by an act of taxation effectually carried into execution, and that all the colonies should be obliged explicitly to acknowledge that right. Every step is taking to render the taxing America a popular measure here, by continually insisting on the topics of our wealth and flourishing circumstances, while this country is loaded with debt, great part of it incurred on our account, the distress of the poor here by the multitude and weight of taxes, &c. &c.; and though the traders

and manufacturers may possibly be kept in our interest, the idea of an American tax is very pleasing to the landed men, who therefore readily receive and propagate these sentiments wherever they have influence. If such a bill should be brought in, it is hard to say what would be the event of it, or what would be the effects. Those who oppose it, though they should be strong enough to throw it out, would be stigmatised as *Americans*, betrayers of old England, &c.; and perhaps our friends by this means being excluded, a majority of our adversaries may get in, and then the act infallibly passes the following session. To avoid the danger of such exclusion, perhaps little opposition will be given, and then it passes immediately. I know not what to advise upon this occasion, but that we should all do our endeavors on both sides the water to lessen the present unpopularity of the American cause, conciliate the affections of people here towards us, increase by all possible means the number of our friends, and be careful not to weaken their hands and strengthen those of our enemies, by rash proceedings on our side, the mischiefs of which are inconceivable. Some of our friends have thought that a publication of my examination here, might answer some of the above purposes, by removing prejudices, and refuting falsehoods, and demonstrating our merits with regard to this country. It is accordingly printed and has a great run. I have another piece in hand which I intend to put out about the time of the meeting of parliament, if those I consult with shall judge that it may be of service.

The next session of parliament will probably be a short one, on account of the following election. And

I am now advised by some of our great friends here to see that out, not returning to America till the spring. My presence indeed is necessary there to settle some private affairs. Unforeseen and unavoidable difficulties have hitherto obstructed our proceedings in the main intent of my coming over, and perhaps (though I think my being here has not been altogether unserviceable) our friends in the assembly may begin to be discouraged and tired of the expense. If that should be the case I would not have you propose to continue me as agent at the meeting of the new assembly; my endeavors to serve the province in what I may while I remain here, shall not be lessened by that omission.

I am glad you have made a trial of paper money, *not a legal tender*. The quantity being small may perhaps be kept up in full credit notwithstanding; and if that can be avoided, I am not for applying here again very soon for a repeal of the restraining act. I am afraid an ill use will be made of it. The plan of our adversaries is to render assemblies in America useless; and to have a revenue independent of their grants, for all the purposes of their defence, and supporting governments among them. It is our interest to prevent this. And that they may not lay hold of our necessities for paper money, to draw a revenue from that article, whenever they grant us the liberty we want of making it a legal tender, I wish some other method may be fallen upon of supporting its credit. What think you of getting all the merchants, traders, and principal people of all sorts to join in petitions to the assembly for a moderate emission, the petition being

accompanied with a mutual engagement to take it in all dealings at the rates fixed by law? Such an engagement had a great effect in fixing the value and rates of our gold and silver. Or, perhaps a bank might be established that would answer all purposes. Indeed I think with you that those merchants here who have made difficulties on the subject of the legal tender, have not "understood their own interests. For there can be no doubt, that should a scarcity of money continue among us, we shall take off less of their merchandise, and attend more to manufacturing and raising the necessaries and superfluities of life among ourselves, which we now receive from them." And perhaps this consequence would attend our making no paper money at all of any sort; that being thus by a want of cash driven to industry and frugality, we should gradually become more rich without their trade, than we can possibly be with it; and by keeping in the country the real cash that comes into it, have in time a quantity sufficient for all our occasions. But I suppose our people will scarce have patience to wait for this.

I have received the printed votes, but not the laws. I hear nothing yet of any objection made by the proprietaries to any of them at the board of trade.

Please to present my duty to the assembly, with thanks for their care of me, and assure them of my most faithful services. With sincerest esteem and respect, I am, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO GOVERNOR FRANKLIN,\* NEW JERSEY.

DEAR SON,

London, August 28, 1767.

Last week I dined at Lord Shelburne's, and had a long conversation with him and Mr. Conway (there being no other company), on the subject of reducing American expense. They have it in contemplation to return the management of Indian affairs into the hands of the several provinces on which the nations border, that the colonies may bear the charge of treaties, &c. which they think will then be managed more frugally, the treasury being tired with the immense drafts of the superintendants, &c. I took the opportunity of urging it as one means of saving expense in supporting the out-posts, that a settlement should be made in the Illinois country; expatiated on the various advantages, viz. furnishing provisions cheaper to the garrisons, securing the country, retaining the trade, raising a strength there which, on occasion of a future war, might easily be poured down the Mississippi upon the lower country, and into the Bay of Mexico, to be used against Cuba, or Mexico itself, &c. I mentioned your plan, its being approved by Sir William Johnson, the readiness and ability of the gentlemen concerned to carry the settlement into execution with very little expense to the crown, &c. &c. The secretaries appeared finally to be fully convinced, and there remained no obstacle but the board of trade, which was to be brought over privately before the matter should be referred to them officially. In case of laying aside the superintendants, a provision was thought of for Sir William Johnson, &c. We had a good deal of farther dis-

\* Dr. Franklin's son.

course on American affairs, particularly on paper money: Lord Shelburne declared himself fully convinced of the utility of taking off the restraint, by my answer to the report of the board of trade. General Conway had not seen it, and desired me to send it to him, which I did next morning. They gave me expectation of a repeal next session, Lord Clare being come over: but they said there was some difficulty with others at the board who had signed that report; for there was a good deal in what Soame Jenyns had laughingly said when asked to concur in some measure, *I have no kind of objection to it, provided we have heretofore signed nothing to the contrary.* In this conversation I did not forget our main Pennsylvania business, and I think made some farther progress, though but little. The two secretaries seemed intent upon preparing business for next parliament, which makes me think that the late projects of changes are now quite over, and that they expect to continue in place. But whether they will do much or little, I cannot say.

De Guerchy, the French ambassador, is gone home, and Monsieur Durand is left minister plenipotentiary. He is extremely curious to inform himself in the affairs of America; pretends to have a great esteem for me, on account of the abilities shown in my examination; has desired to have all my political writings; invited me to dine with him; was very inquisitive; treated me with great civility; makes me visits, &c. I fancy that intriguing nation would like very well to meddle on occasion, and blow up the coals between Britain and her colonies; but I hope we shall give them no opportunity.

I write this in a great hurry, being setting out in



an hour on another journey with my steady good friend Sir John Pringle. We propose to visit Paris. Durand has given my letters of recommendation to the Lord knows who. I am told I shall meet with great respect there; but winds change, and perhaps it will be full as well if I do not. We shall be gone about six weeks. I have a little private commission to transact, of which more another time. Communicate nothing of this letter but privately to our friend Galloway. I am your affectionate father,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO GOVERNOR FRANKLIN.

DEAR SON,

London, Nov. 25, 1767.

I think the New Yorkers have been very discreet in forbearing to write and publish against the late act of parliament. I wish the Boston people had been as quiet, since Governor Bernard has sent over all their violent papers to the ministry, and wrote them word that he daily expected a rebellion. He did indeed afterwards correct this extravagance by writing again, that he now understood those papers were approved but by few, and disliked by all the sober sensible people of the province. A certain noble lord expressed himself to me with some disgust and contempt of B. on this occasion; saying he ought to have known his people better, than to impute to the whole country sentiments that perhaps are only scribbled by some madman in a garret; that he appeared to be too fond of contention, and mistook the matter greatly, in supposing such letters as he wrote were acceptable to the ministry. I have heard nothing of the appointment of General Clarke to New York: but I know he is a friend of Lord

Shelburne's, and the same that recommended Mr. M'Lean to be his secretary. Perhaps it might be talked of in my absence.

The commissioners for the American board went hence while I was in France; you know before this time who they are, and how they are received, which I want to hear. Mr. Williams, who is gone in some office with them, is brother to our cousin Williams of Boston; but I assure you I had not the least share in his appointment; having, as I told you before, carefully kept out of the way of that whole affair.

As soon as I received Mr. Galloway's, Mr. T. Wharton's, and Mr. Croghan's letters on the subject of the boundary, I communicated them immediately to Lord Shelburne. He invited me the next day to dine with him. Lord Clare was to have been there, but did not come. There was nobody but Mr. M'Lean. My lord knew nothing of the boundary's having ever been agreed on by Sir William, had sent the letters to the board of trade, desiring search to be made there for Sir William's letters, and ordered Mr. M'Lean to search the secretary's office, who found nothing. We had much discourse about it; and I pressed the importance of dispatching orders immediately to Sir William to complete the affair. His lordship asked who was to make the purchase, i. e. be at the expense? I said that if the line included any lands within the grants of the charter colonies, they should pay the purchase money of such proportion. If any within the proprietary grants, they should pay their proportion; but that what was within royal governments, where the king granted the lands, the crown should pay for that proportion. His lordship was pleased to say, he thought this

reasonable. He finally desired me to go to Lord Clare as from him, and urge the business there, which I undertook to do. Among other things at this conversation we talked of the new settlement; his lordship told me he had himself drawn up a paper of reasons for those settlements, which he laid before the king in council, acquainting them that he did not offer them merely as his own sentiments, they were what he had collected from General Amherst, Dr. Franklin, and Mr. Jackson, three gentlemen that were allowed to be the best authorities for any thing that related to America. I think he added, that the council seemed to approve of the design: I know it was referred to the board of trade, who, I believe, have not yet reported on it, and I doubt will report against it. My lord told me one pleasant circumstance, viz. that he had shown his paper to the dean of Gloucester (Tucker) to hear his opinion of the matter; who very sagaciously remarked, that he was sure that paper was drawn up by Dr. Franklin; he saw him in every paragraph; adding, that Dr. Franklin wanted to remove the seat of government to America: that, said he, is his constant plan.

I waited next morning upon Lord Clare, and pressed the matter of the boundary closely upon him. He said they could not find they had ever received any letters from Sir William concerning this boundary, but were searching farther: agreed to the necessity of settling it; but thought there would be some difficulty about who should pay the purchase-money; for that this country was already so loaded it could bear no more. We then talked of the new colonies. I found he was inclined to think one near the mouth of the Ohio might be of

use, in securing the country, but did not much approve that at Detroit. And as to the trade, he imagined it would be of little consequence if we had all the peltry to be purchased there, but supposed our traders would sell it chiefly to the French and Spaniards, at New Orleans, as he had heard they had hitherto done.

At the same time that we Americans wish not to be judged of in the gross, by particular papers written by anonymous scribblers and published in the colonies, it would be well if we could avoid falling into the same mistake in America, in judging of ministers here by the libels printed against them. The enclosed is a very abusive one, in which, if there is any foundation of truth, it can only be in the insinuation contained in the words, "*after eleven adjournments,*" that they are too apt to postpone business: but if they have given any occasion for this reflection, there are reasons and circumstances that may be urged in their excuse.

It gives me pleasure to hear that the people of the other colonies are not insensible of the zeal with which I occasionally espouse their respective interests, as well as the interests of the whole. I shall continue to do so as long as I reside here and am able.

The present ministry seem now likely to continue through this session of parliament; and perhaps, if the new parliament should not differ greatly in complexion from this, they may be fixed for a number of years, which I earnestly wish, as we have no chance for a better. Your affectionate father,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO JOSEPH GALLOWAY, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

London, Dec. 1, 1767.

I duly received your favors of August 22, September 20, and October 8, and within these few days one of February 14, recommending Mr. Morgan Edwards and his affair of the Rhode Island college, which I shall endeavor to promote, deeming the institution one of the most catholic and generous of the kind.

I am inclined to think with you, that the small sum you have issued to discharge the public debts only, will not be materially affected in its credit for want of a legal tender, considering especially the present extreme want of money in the province. You appear to me to point out the true cause of the general distress, viz. the late luxurious mode of living introduced by a too great plenty of cash. It is indeed amazing to consider that we had a quantity sufficient before the war began, and that the war added immensely to that quantity by the sums spent among us by the crown, and the paper struck and issued in the province; and now, in so few years, all the money spent by the crown is gone away, and has carried with it all the gold and silver we had before, leaving us bare and empty, and at the same time more in debt to England than ever we were! But I am inclined to think that the mere making more money will not mend our circumstances, if we do not return to that industry and frugality which were the fundamental causes of our former prosperity. I shall, nevertheless, do my utmost this winter to obtain the repeal of the act restraining the legal tender, if our friends the merchants think it practicable, and will heartily espouse

the cause ; and in truth, they have full as much interest in the event as we have.

The present ministry, it is now thought, are likely to continue at least till a new parliament ; so that our apprehensions of a change, and that Mr. Grenville would come in again, seem over for the present. He behaves as if a little out of his head on the article of America, which he brings into every debate without rhyme or reason, when the matter has not the least connexion with it : thus at the beginning of this session, on the debate upon the king's speech he tired every body, even his friends, with a long harangue about and against America, of which there was not a word in the speech. Last Friday he produced in the house a late Boston gazette, which he said denied the legislative authority of parliament, was treasonable, rebellious, &c., and moved it might be read, and that the house would take cognizance of it ; but it being moved, on the other hand, that Mr. G.'s motion should be postponed to that day six months, it was carried without a division : and as it is known that this parliament will expire before that time, it was equivalent to a total rejection of the motion. The Duke of B. too, it seems, moved in vain for a consideration of this paper in the house of lords. These are favorable symptoms of the present disposition of parliament towards America, which I hope no conduct of the Americans will give just cause of altering.

Be so good as to present my best respects to the house ; and believe me, with sincere esteem and regard, dear sir, your affectionate friend and most obedient servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MR. ROSS, PHILADELPHIA.

DEAR SIR,

London, Dec. 12, 1767.

The instruction you mention, as proposed by a certain great man, was really a wild one. The reasons you made use of against it were clear and strong, and could not but prevail. It will be time enough to show a dislike to the coalition when it is proposed to us. Meanwhile we have all the advantage in the agreement of taxation, which our not being represented will continue to give us. I think indeed that such an event is very remote. This nation is indeed too proud to propose admitting American representatives into their parliament; and America is not so humble, or so fond of the honor, as to petition for it. In matrimonial matches, it is said, when one party is willing the match is half made; but where neither party is willing there is no great danger of their coming together. And to be sure such an important business would never be treated of by agents unimpowered and uninstructed; nor would government here act upon the private opinion of agents which might be disowned by their constituents.

The present ministry seem now likely to continue through this session; and this, as a new election approaches, gives them the advantage of getting so many of their friends chosen as may give a stability to their administration. I heartily wish it, because they are all well disposed towards America.

With sincere esteem, I am, dear sir, your affectionate friend and most obedient servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO GOVERNOR FRANKLIN.

DEAR SON,

London, Dec. 19, 1767.

The resolutions of the Boston people concerning trade make a great noise here. Parliament has not yet taken notice of them, but the newspapers are in full cry against America. Colonel Onslow told me at court last Sunday, that I could not conceive how much the friends of America were run upon and hurt by them, and how much the Grenvillians triumphed. I have just written a paper for next Tuesday's Chronicle, to extenuate matters a little.

Mentioning Colonel Onslow, reminds me of something that passed at the beginning of this session in the house, between him and Mr. Grenville. The latter had been raving against America, as traitorous, rebellious, &c. when the former, who has always been its firm friend, stood up and gravely said, that in reading the Roman history, he found it was a custom among that wise and magnanimous people, whenever the senate was informed of any discontent in the provinces, to send two or three of their body into the discontented provinces, to inquire into the grievances complained of, and report to the senate, that mild measures might be used to remedy what was amiss, before any severe steps were taken to enforce obedience. That this example he thought worthy our imitation in the present state of our colonies; for he did so far agree with the honorable gentleman that spoke just before him, as to allow that there were great discontents among them. He should therefore beg leave to move, that two or three members of parliament be appointed to go over to New England on this service. And that it might not be supposed he was for imposing burthens on others



that he would not be willing to bear himself, he did, at the same time, declare his own willingness, if the house should think fit to appoint them, to go over thither *with that honorable gentleman*. Upon this there was a great laugh, which continued some time, and was rather increased by Mr. Grenville's asking, "will the gentleman engage that I shall be safe there? Can I be assured that I shall be allowed to come back again to make the report?" As soon as the laugh was so far subsided as that Mr. Onslow could be heard again, he added: "I cannot absolutely engage for the honorable gentleman's safe return; but if he goes thither upon this service, I am strongly of opinion the *event* will contribute greatly to the future quiet of both countries." On which the laugh was renewed and redoubled.

If our people should follow the Boston example in entering into resolutions of frugality and industry, full as necessary for us as for them, I hope they will among other things give this reason, that it is to enable them more speedily and effectually to discharge their debts to Great Britain: this will soften a little, and at the same time appear honorable and like ourselves. Yours, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

FROM GOVERNOR POWNALL TO DR. FRANKLIN.

DEAR SIR,

The following *objection* against communicating to the colonies the rights, privileges, and powers of the realm, as to parts of the realm, has been made. I have been endeavoring to obviate it, and I communicate [it] to you, in hopes of your promised assistance.

If, *say the objectors*, we communicate to the colonies the power of sending representatives, and in

consequence expect them to participate in an *equal share and proportion* of all our taxes, we must grant to them all the powers of trade and manufacturing, which any other parts of the realm within the isle of Great Britain enjoy.—If so, perchance the profits of the Atlantic commerce may converge to some centre in America; to Boston, New York, Philadelphia, or to some of the isles:—if so, then the natural and artificial produce of the colonies, and in course of consequences, the landed interest of the colonies, will be promoted; while the natural and artificial produce and landed interest of Great Britain will be depressed, to its utter ruin and destruction;—and consequently the balance of the power of government, although still *within the realm*, will be *locally* transferred from Great Britain to the colonies. Which consequence, however it may suit a citizen of the world, must be folly and madness to a *Briton*.

Your friend, &c. J. POWNALL.

*On the back of the foregoing letter of Governor Pownall are the following minutes by Dr. Franklin.*

This *objection* goes upon the supposition, that whatever the colonies gain, Britain must lose; and that if the *colonies* can be kept from gaining an advantage, *Britain will gain it*:—

If the colonies are fitter for a particular trade than Britain, they should have it, and Britain apply to what it is more fit for. The whole empire is a gainer. And if Britain is not so fit or so well situated for a particular advantage, *other* countries will get it, *if the colonies do not*. Thus Ireland was forbid the wool-len manufacture, and remains poor; but this has

given to the French the trade and wealth Ireland might have gained for the British empire.

The government cannot *long* be retained without the union. Which is best (supposing your case), to have a total separation, or a change of the seat of government? It by no means follows, that promoting and advancing the landed interest in America will depress that of Britain: the contrary has always been the fact. Advantageous situations and circumstances will always secure and fix manufactures: Sheffield against all Europe these 300 years past.

TO GOVERNOR FRANKLIN.

DEAR SON,

London, Jan. 9, 1768.

We have had so many alarms of changes which did not take place, that just when I wrote it was thought the ministry would stand their ground. However, immediately after the talk was renewed, and it soon appeared the Sunday changes were actually settled. Mr. Conway resigns, and Lord Weymouth takes his place. Lord Gower is made president of the council in the room of Lord Northington. Lord Shelburne is stript of the American business, which is given to Lord Hillsborough as secretary of state for America, a new distinct department. Lord Sandwich, it is said, comes into the post-office in his place. Several of the Bedford party are now to come in. How these changes may affect us, a little time will show. Little at present is thought of but elections, which gives me hopes that nothing will be done against America this session, though the Boston gazette had occasioned some heats, and the Boston resolutions a prodigious clamor. I have endeavored to palliate matters for them as well as I

can. I send you my manuscript of one paper, though I think you take the Chronicle. The editor of that paper, one Jones, seems a Grenvillian, or is very cautious, as you will see by his corrections and omissions. He has drawn the teeth and pared the nails of my paper, so that it can neither scratch nor bite. It seems only to paw and mumble. I send you also two other late pieces of mine. There is another which I cannot find.

I am told there has been a talk of getting me appointed under secretary to Lord Hillsborough; but with little likelihood, as it is a settled point here that I am too much of an American.

I am in very good health, thanks to God. Your affectionate father,  
B. FRANKLIN.

TO JOSEPH GALLOWAY, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

London, Jan. 9, 1768.

I wrote to you *via* Boston, and have little to add except to acquaint you that some changes have taken place since my last, which have not the most promising aspect for America, several of the Bedford party being come into employment again; a party that has distinguished itself by exclaiming against us on all late occasions. Mr. Conway, one of our friends, has resigned, and Lord Weymouth takes his place. Lord Shelburne, another friend, is stripped of the American part of the business of his office, which now makes a distinct department, in which Lord Hillsborough is placed. I do not think this nobleman in general an enemy to America; but in the affair of paper money he was last winter strongly against us. I did hope I had removed some of his prejudices on that head, but am not certain. We

have however increased the cry for it here, and believe shall attempt to obtain the repeal of the act, though the Boston gazette and their resolutions about manufactures have hurt us much, having occasioned an immense clamor here. I have endeavored to palliate matters for them as well as I can, and hope with some success. For having in a large company, in which were some members of parliament, given satisfaction to all by what I alleged in explanation of the conduct of the Americans, and to show that they were not quite so unreasonable as they appear to be, I was advised by several present to make my sentiments public, not only for the sake of America, but as it would be some ease to our friends here, who are triumphed over a good deal by our adversaries on the occasion. I have accordingly done it in the enclosed paper. I shall write you fully on other subjects very soon: at present can only add my respects to the committee, and that I am, dear sir, your faithful humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO JOSEPH GALLOWAY, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

London, Feb. 17, 1768.

In mine of January 9, I wrote to you that I believed, notwithstanding the clamor against America had been greatly increased by the Boston proceedings, we should attempt this session to obtain the repeal of the restraining act relating to paper money. The change of administration with regard to American affairs, which was agreed on some time before the new secretary kissed hands and entered upon business, made it impossible to go forward with that affair, as the minister quitting that depart-

ment would not, and his successor could not engage in it; but now our friends the merchants have been moving in it, and some of them have conceived hopes from the manner in which Lord Hillsborough attended to their representations. It had been previously concluded among us, that if the repeal was to be obtained at all, it must be proposed in the light of a favor to the merchants of this country, and asked for by them, not by the agents as a favor to America. But as my lord had at sundry times, before he came into his present station, discoursed with me on the subject, and got from me a copy of my answer to his report when at the head of the board of trade, which some time since he thanked me for, and said he would read again and consider carefully, I waited upon him this morning, partly with intent to learn if he had changed his sentiments. We entered into the subject and had a long conversation upon it, in which all the arguments he used against the legal tender of paper money were intended to demonstrate that it was for the benefit of the people themselves to have no such money current among them; and it was strongly his opinion, that after the experience of being without it a few years, we should all be convinced of this truth, as, he said, the New England colonies now were, they having lately, on the rumor of an intended application for taking off the restraint, petitioned here that it might be continued as to them. However, his lordship was pleased to say, that if such application was made for the three colonies of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York, as I proposed, it should have fair play: he would himself give it no sort of opposition; but he was sure it

would meet with a great deal, and he thought it could not succeed. He was pleased to make me compliments upon my paper, assuring me he had read it with a great deal of attention; that I had said much more in favor of such a currency than he thought could be said, and all he believed that the subject would admit of; but that it had not on the whole changed his opinion, any further than to induce him to leave the matter now to the judgment of others, and let it take its course, without opposing it, as last year he had determined to have done. I go into the city to-morrow to confer with the merchants again upon it; that if they see any hopes, we may at least try the event: but I own my expectations are now very slender, knowing, as I do, that nothing is to be done in parliament that is not a measure adopted by ministry and supported by their strength, much less any thing they are averse to *or indifferent about*.

I took the opportunity of discoursing with his lordship concerning our particular affair of the change of government, gave him a detail of all proceedings hitherto, the delays it had met with, and its present situation. He was pleased to say he would inquire into the matter, and would talk with me further upon it. He expressed great satisfaction in the good disposition that he said appeared now to be general in America with regard to government here, according to the latest advices; and informed me that he had by his majesty's order wrote the most healing letters to the several governors, which, if shown to the assemblies, as he supposed they would be, could not but confirm that good disposition. As to the permission we want to bring wine,

fruit, and oil, directly from Spain and Portugal, and to carry iron direct to foreign markets, it is agreed on all hands that this is an unfavorable time to move in those matters, G. Grenville and those in the opposition on every hint of the kind making a great noise about the act of navigation, that palladium of England, as they call it, to be given up to rebellious America, &c. &c.; so that the ministry would not venture to propose it if *they* approved. I am to wait on the secretary again next Wednesday, and shall write you further what passes that is material.

The parliament have of late been acting an egregious farce, calling before them the mayor and aldermen of Oxford, for proposing a sum to be paid by their old members on being rechosen at the next election; and sundry printers and brokers for advertising and dealing in boroughs, &c. The Oxford people were sent to Newgate, and discharged after some days in humble petition, and receiving the speaker's reprimand upon their knees. The house could scarcely keep countenances, knowing, as they all do, that the practice is general. People say, they mean nothing more than to beat down the price by a little discouragement of borough-jobbing, now that their own elections are all coming on. The price indeed is grown exorbitant; no less than 4000*l.* for a member! Mr. Beckford has brought in a bill for preventing bribery and corruption in elections, wherein was a clause to oblige every member to swear on their admission into the house, that he had not directly or indirectly given any bribe to any elector, &c.; but this was so universally exclaimed against, as answering no end but perjuring the members, that he has been obliged to withdraw that



clause. It was indeed a cruel contrivance of his, worse than the gunpowder plot; for that was only to blow the parliament up to heaven; this is to sink them all down to ——! Mr. Thurlow opposed his bill by a long speech. Beckford, in reply, gave a dry hit to the house, that is repeated every where: “the honorable gentleman,” says he, “in his learned discourse, gave us first one definition of corruption, then he gave us another definition of corruption, and I think he was about to give us a third. Pray does that gentleman imagine *there is any member of this house that does not* KNOW what corruption is?” which occasioned only a roar of laughter; for they are so hardened in the practice that they are very little ashamed of it. This between ourselves. I am, with sincerest esteem, dear sir, your most obedient humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO T. WHARTON, ESQ. PHILADELPHIA.

DEAR FRIEND,

London, Feb. 20, 1768.

The story you mention of Secretary Conway's wondering what I could be doing in England, and that he had not seen me for a considerable time, savors strongly of the channel through which it came, and deserves no notice. But since his name is mentioned, it gives me occasion to relate what passed between us the last time I had the honor of conversing with him. It was at court, when the late changes were first rumored, and it was reported he was to resign the secretary's office. Talking of America, I said I was sorry to find that our friends were one after another quitting the administration; that I was apprehensive of the consequences, and hoped what I heard of his going out was not true.

He said it was really true, the employment had not been of his choice, he had never any taste for it, but had submitted to engage in it for a time at the instance of his friends, and he believed his removal could not be attended with any ill consequences to America. That he was a sincere wellwisher to the prosperity of that country as well as this, and hoped the imprudencies of either side would never be carried to such a height as to create a breach of the union, so essentially necessary to the welfare of both. That as long as his majesty continued to honor him with a share in his councils, America should always find in him a friend, &c. This I write as it was agreeable to me to hear, and I suppose will be so to you to read. For his character has more in it of the frank honesty of the soldier, than of the plausible insincerity of the courtier; and therefore what he says is more to be depended on. The proprietor's dislike to my continuing in England to be sure is very natural; as well as to the repeated choice of assembly-men not his friends; and probably he would, as they so little answer his purposes, wish to see elections as well as agencies abolished. They make him very unhappy, but it cannot be helped.

The proceedings in Boston, as the news came just upon the meeting of parliament, and occasioned great clamor here, gave me much concern. And as every offensive thing done in America is charged upon all, and every province, though unconcerned in it, suffers in its interests through the general disgust given, and the little distinction here made, it became necessary I thought to palliate the matter a little for our own sakes; and therefore I wrote the

paper which probably you have seen printed in the Chronicle of January 7, and signed F+S.\* Yours affectionately,  
B. FRANKLIN.

TO GOVERNOR FRANKLIN.

DEAR SON,

London, March 13, 1768.

The purpose of settling the new colonies seems at present to be dropped, the change of American administration not appearing favorable to it. There seems rather to be an inclination to abandon the posts in the back country as more expensive than useful; but counsels are so continually fluctuating here, that nothing can be depended on. The new secretary, my Lord Hillsborough, is I find of opinion that the troops should be placed, the chief part of them, in Canada and Florida, only three battalions to be quartered in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania; and that forts Pitt, Oswego, Niagara, &c. should be left to the colonies to garrison and keep up if they think it necessary for the protection of their trade, &c. Probably his opinion may be followed, if new changes do not produce other ideas. As to my own sentiments, I am weary of suggesting them to so many different inattentive heads, though I must continue to do it while I stay among them. The letters from Sir William Johnson relating to the boundary were at last found, and orders were sent over about Christmas for completing the purchase and settlement of it. My Lord H. has promised me to send duplicates by this packet, and urge the speedy execution, as we represented to him the

\* MEMOIRS OF LIFE, Part III. p. 179, 4to ed. and WRITINGS, 4to ed. Part 1. sect. 1, p. 43.

danger that these dissatisfactions of the Indians might produce a war. But I can tell you there are many here to whom the news of such a war would give pleasure ; who speak of it as a thing to be wished ; partly as a chastisement to the colonies, and partly to make them feel the want of protection from this country, and pray for it. For it is imagined that we could not possibly defend ourselves against the Indians without such assistance, so little is the state of America understood here.

My Lord H. mentioned the Farmer's letters to me, said he had read them, that they were well written, and he believed he could guess who was the author, looking in my face at the same time, as if he thought it was me. He censured the doctrines as extremely wild, &c. I have read them as far as No. 8. I know not if any more have been published. I should have thought they had been written by Mr. Delancy, not having heard any mention of the others you point out as joint authors. I am not yet master of the idea these and the New England writers have of the relation between Britain and her colonies. I know not what the Boston people mean by the "subordination" they acknowledge in their assembly to parliament, while they deny its power to make laws for them, nor what bounds the Farmer sets to the power he acknowledges in parliament to "regulate the trade of the colonies ;" it being difficult to draw lines between duties for regulation and those for revenue, and if the parliament is to be the judge, it seems to me that establishing such principles of distinction will amount to little. The more I have thought and read on the subject the more I find myself confirmed in opinion, that no middle

doctrine can be well maintained, I mean not clearly with intelligible arguments. Something might be made of either of the extremes ; that parliament has a power to make *all laws* for us, or that it has a power to make *no laws* for us ; and I think the arguments for the latter more numerous and weighty than those for the former. Supposing that doctrine established, the colonies would then be so many separate states, only subject to the same king ; as England and Scotland were before the Union. And then the question would be, whether a union like that with Scotland would or would not be advantageous to *the whole*. I should have no doubt of the affirmative, being fully persuaded that it would be best for *the whole*, and that though particular parts might find particular disadvantages in it, they would find greater advantages in the security arising to every part from the increased strength of the whole. But such union is not likely to take place while the nature of our present relation is so little understood on both sides the water, and sentiments concerning it remain so widely different. As to the Farmers' combating, as you say they intend to do, my opinion that the parliament might lay duties though not impose internal taxes, I shall not give myself the trouble to defend it. Only to you, I may say, that not only the parliament of Britain, but every state in Europe claims and exercises a right of laying duties on the exportation of its own commodities to foreign countries. A duty is paid here on coals exported to Holland, and yet England has no right to lay an internal tax on Holland. All goods brought out of France to England, or any other country, are charged with a small duty in France, which the consumers pay,

and yet France has no right to tax other countries. And in my opinion the grievance is not that Britain puts duties upon her own manufactures exported to us, but that she forbids us to buy the like manufactures from any other country. This she does however in virtue of her allowed right to regulate the commerce of the whole empire, allowed I mean by the Farmer, though I think whoever would dispute that right, might stand upon firmer ground and make much more of the argument: but my reasons are too many and too long for a letter.

Mr. Grenville complained in the house that the governors of New Jersey, New Hampshire, East and West Florida, had none of them obeyed the orders sent them to give an account of the manufactures carried on in their respective provinces. Upon hearing this I went after the house was up, and got a sight of the reports made by the other governors. They are all much in the same strain, that there are no manufactures of any consequence; in Massachusetts a little coarse woollen only made in families for their own wear: glass and linen have been tried and failed. Rhode Island, Connecticut, and New York, much the same. Pennsylvania has tried a linen manufactory, but it is dropped, it being imported cheaper; there is a glass-house in Lancaster county, but it makes only a little coarse ware for the country neighbors. Maryland is clothed all with English manufactures. Virginia the same, except that in their families they spin a little cotton of their own growing. South Carolina and Georgia none. All speak of the dearness of labor that makes manufactures impracticable. Only the governor of North Carolina parades with a large manufacture in

his country that may be useful to Britain of *pine boards*; they having fifty saw-mills on one river. These accounts are very satisfactory here, and induce the parliament to despise and take no notice of the Boston resolutions. I wish you would send your account before the meeting of next parliament. You have only to report a glass-house for coarse window glass and bottles, and some domestic manufactures of linen and woollen for family use that do not half clothe the inhabitants, all the finer goods coming from England and the like. I believe you will be puzzled to find any other, though I see great puffs in the papers.

The parliament is up, and the nation in a ferment with the new elections. Great complaints are made that the natural interest of country gentlemen in their neighboring boroughs, is overborne by the monied interest of the new people who have got sudden fortunes in the Indies, or as contractors, &c.; 4000*l.* is now the market price for a borough. In short, this whole venal nation is now at market, will be sold for about two millions; and might be bought out of the hands of the present bidders (if he would offer half a million more) by the very devil himself.

I shall wait on Lord H. again next Wednesday on behalf of the sufferers by Indian and French depredations, to have an allowance of lands out of any new grant made by the Indians so long solicited (and perhaps still to be solicited) in vain. I am  
your affectionate father,

B. FRANKLIN.

## TO THE COMMITTEE OF CORRESPONDENCE, PENNSYLVANIA.

GENTLEMEN,

London, March 13, 1768.

On receipt of your letter of January 20, Mr. Jackson and myself waited on Lord Hillsborough, the new secretary of state for American affairs, and communicated to him the contents, pressing the necessity of enforcing the orders already sent to Sir William Johnson for immediately settling the affair of the boundary line with the Indians. His lordship was pleased to assure us, that he would cause duplicates of the orders to be forwarded by this packet and urge the completion of them.

We communicated also the copy of General Gage's letter, and the messages that had passed between the governor and the house thereupon. His lordship acquainted us that a letter from Governor Penn had been shown him by the proprietor, importing that a horrid murder had lately been committed on the Indians, upon which the governor had issued a proclamation for apprehending the murderer; and that a bill was under his and the council's consideration to prevent future settlements on Indian lands. But his lordship remarked that these messages had not been communicated to him by the proprietor.

Government here begins to grow tired of the enormous expense of Indian affairs, and of maintaining posts in the Indian country, and it is now talked of as a proper measure to abandon these posts, demolishing all but such as the colonies may think fit to keep up at their own expense; and also to return the management of their own Indian affairs into the hands of the respective provinces as formerly. What the result will be is uncertain, counsels here



being so continually fluctuating. But I have urged often that after taking those affairs out of our hands, it seems highly incumbent on the ministry not to neglect them, but to see that they are well managed, and the Indians kept in peace. I think, however, that we should not too much depend on their doing this, but look to the matter a little ourselves, taking every opportunity of conciliating the affections of the Indians by seeing that they always have justice done them, and sometimes kindness. For I can assure you that here are not wanting people who, though not now in the ministry, no one knows how soon they may be, and if they were ministers would take no step to prevent an Indian war in the colonies, being of opinion, which they express openly, that it would be a very good thing, in the first place to chastise the colonists for their undutifulness, and then to make them sensible of the necessity of protection by the troops of this country. I am, gentlemen, your most obedient, and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO JOSEPH GALLOWAY, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

London, March 13, 1768.

I wrote to you very fully per Falconer on February 17, and have since received yours of January 21, together with one from the committee, and the messages, which as you will see by my answer to the committee I communicated to Lord Hillsborough. His lordship read them deliberately, and took notice that the message of the assembly seemed to insinuate that the governor had been tardy in bringing the former murderers to justice, which gave me an opportunity of explaining that matter to

him; whereby he might also understand why the proprietor had not shown him the messages when he communicated the governor's letter concerning the Indian uneasinesses, the law under his consideration for removing them, the late murder, and his proclamation. I shall wait on his lordship again next Wednesday on our affairs, and show him moreover your letter with some other papers.

The old parliament is gone, and its enemies now find themselves at liberty to abuse it. I enclose you a pamphlet published the very hour of its prorogation. All the members are now in their counties and boroughs among their drunken electors; much confusion and disorder in many places, and such profusion of money as never was known before on any similar occasion. The first instance of bribery to be chosen a member, taken notice of on the journals, is no longer ago than Queen Elizabeth's time, when the being sent to parliament was looked upon as a troublesome service, and therefore not sought after: it is said that such a one, "being a simple man, and conceiving it might be of some advantage to him, had given *four pounds* to the mayor and corporation that they might choose him to serve them in parliament." The price is monstrously risen since that time, for it is now no less than 4000*l.*! It is thought that near two millions will be spent this election; but those who understand figures and act by computation, say, the crown has two millions a year in places and pensions to dispose of, and it is well worth while to engage in such a seven year's lottery, though all that have tickets should not get prizes. I am, my dear friend, yours affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE COMMITTEE OF CORRESPONDENCE,  
PENNSYLVANIA.

GENTLEMEN,

London, Saturday, April 16, 1768.

I have just received your favor of February 20, directed to Mr. Jackson and myself, containing instructions for our conduct relating to the application for a repeal of the duty act, to the change of government, and to the legal tender of paper money; which instructions we shall observe to the best of our abilities. Mr. Jackson has read your letter, and is now reading the messages and other papers transmitted to us, which we shall lay before the secretaries of state on Monday, and thereupon press the necessity of a change in the administration of our province. The parliament will have a short session, it is said, in May, when, if any application is made for the repeal of that act by the agents of the other colonies, we shall join them heartily, and do what we can likewise in the affair of paper money. In the mean time should an Indian war make it necessary to emit paper money with a legal tender, it may be considered how far the fourth clause in the act of the 24 Geo. II. might give countenance to your providing in that way for the emergency; that act not being altered or repealed by any later, it seems as if the parliament thought that clause not improper, though they have not expressly made the same provision for the other colonies. The mail being to go this evening, I can only add, that I am with the utmost respect for you and the assembly, gentlemen, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO GOVERNOR FRANKLIN.

DEAR SON,

London, April 16, 1768.

Since my last, a long one of March 13, nothing has been talked or thought of here, but elections. There have been amazing contests all over the kingdom, 20 or 30,000*l.* of a side spent in several places, and inconceivable mischief done by debauching the people and making them idle, besides the immediate actual mischief done by drunken mad mobs to houses, windows, &c. The scenes have been horrible. London was illuminated two nights running at the command of the mob for the success of Wilkes in the Middlesex election; the second night exceeded any thing of the kind ever seen here on the greatest occasions of rejoicing, as even the small cross streets, lanes, courts, and other out-of-the-way places were all in a blaze with lights, and the principal streets all night long, as the mobs went round again after two o'clock, and obliged people who had extinguished their candles to light them again. Those who refused had all their windows destroyed. The damage done and the expense of candles has been computed at 50,000*l.* It must have been great, though probably not so much. The ferment is not yet over, for he has promised to surrender himself to the court next Wednesday, and another tumult is then expected; and what the upshot will be no one can yet foresee. It is really an extraordinary event, to see an outlaw and exile, of bad personal character, not worth a farthing, come over from France, set himself up as a candidate for the capital of the kingdom, miss his election only by being too late in his application, and immediately

carrying it for the principal county. The mob (spirited up by numbers of different ballads sung or roared in every street) requiring gentlemen and ladies of all ranks as they passed in their carriages to shout for Wilkes and liberty, marking the same words on all their coaches with chalk, and No. 45 on every door; which extends a vast way along the roads in the country. I went last week to Winchester, and observed that for fifteen miles out of town, there was scarce a door or window shutter next the road unmarked; and this continued here and there quite to Winchester, which is 64 miles.

\* \* \* \* \*

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MR. ROSS, PHILADELPHIA.

DEAR SIR,

London, May 14, 1768.

I am extremely concerned at the disorders on our frontiers, and at the debility or wicked connivance of our government and magistrates, which must make property and even life more and more insecure among us, if some effectual remedy is not speedily applied. I have laid all the accounts before the ministry here. I wish I could procure more attention to them. I have urged over and over the necessity of the change we desire; but this country itself being at present in a situation very little better, weakens our argument, that a royal government would be better managed and safer to live under than that of a proprietary. Even this capital, the residence of the king, is now a daily scene of lawless riot and confusion. Mobs patrolling the streets at noon-day, some knocking all down that will not roar for Wilkes and liberty; courts of justice afraid to

give judgment against him ; coal-heavers and porters pulling down the houses of coal-merchants that refuse to give them more wages ; sawyers destroying saw mills ; sailors unrigging all the outward-bound ships, and suffering none to sail till merchants agree to raise their pay ; watermen destroying private boats, and threatening bridges ; soldiers firing among the mobs and killing men, women and children : which seems only to have produced an universal sullenness, that looks like a great black cloud coming on, ready to burst in a general tempest. What the event will be, God only knows. But some punishment seems preparing for a people who are ungratefully abusing the best constitution and the best king any nation was ever blessed with ; intent on nothing but luxury, licentiousness, power, places, pensions, and plunder ; while the ministry, divided in their councils, with little regard for each other, worried by perpetual oppositions, in continual apprehension of changes, intent on securing popularity in case they should lose favor, have for some years past had little time or inclination to attend to our small affairs, whose remoteness makes them appear still smaller.

The bishops here are very desirous of securing the Church of England in America, and promoting its interest and enlargement by sending one of their order thither : but though they have long solicited this point with government here, they have not as yet been able to obtain it. So apprehensive are ministers of engaging in any novel measure.

I hope soon to have an opportunity of conferring with you, and therefore say no more at present on this subject. I am, my dear friend, yours affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO JOSEPH GALLOWAY, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

London, May 14, 1768.

I received your favor of March 31. It is now with the messages, &c. in the hands of the minister, so I cannot be more particular at present in answering it than to say, I should have a melancholy prospect in going home to such public confusion, if I did not leave greater confusion behind me. The newspapers and my letter of this day to Mr. Ross will inform you of the miserable situation this country is in. While I am writing, a great mob of coal-porters fill the street, carrying a wretch of their business upon poles to be ducked, and otherwise punished at their pleasure for working at the old wages. All respect to law and government seems to be lost among the common people, who are moreover continually inflamed by seditious scribblers to trample on authority and every thing that used to keep them in order.

The parliament is now sitting, but will not continue long together, nor undertake any material business. The Court of King's Bench postponed giving sentence against Wilkes on his outlawry till the next term, intimidated as some say by his popularity, and willing to get rid of the affair for a time till it should be seen what the parliament would conclude as to his membership. The commons, at least some of them, resent that conduct, which has thrown a burthen on them it might have eased them of, by pillorying or punishing him in some infamous manner, that would have given better ground for expelling him the house. His friends complain of it as a delay of justice, say the court knew the outlawry to be defective, and that they must finally pronounce

it void, but would punish him by long confinement. Great mobs of his adherents have assembled before the prison, the guards have fired on them : it is said five or six are killed and sixteen or seventeen wounded, and some circumstances have attended this military execution, such as its being done by the Scotch regiment, the pursuing a lad and killing him at his father's house, &c. &c. that exasperate people exceedingly, and more mischief seems brewing. Several of the soldiers are imprisoned. If they are not hanged it is feared there will be more and greater mobs ; and if they are, that no soldier will assist in suppressing any mob hereafter. The prospect either way is gloomy. It is said the English soldiers cannot be confided in to act against these mobs, being suspected as rather inclined to favor and join them.

I am preparing for my return, and I hope for the pleasure of finding you well, when I shall have an opportunity of communicating to you more particularly the state of things here relating to our American affairs, which I cannot so well do by letter. I enclose you the report of Sir M. L., counsel to the Board of Trade, on one of your late acts. I suppose it has had its effect, so that the repeal will be of little consequence. In the mean time I am, with sincere esteem and affection, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO GOVERNOR FRANKLIN.

DEAR SON,

London, July 2, 1768.

Instead of my being appointed to a new office, there has been a motion made to deprive me of that I now hold, and I believe for the same reason, though that was not the reason given out, viz. my being too



much of an American ; but, as it came from Lord Sandwich, our new post-master-general, who is of the Bedford party, and a friend of Mr. Grenville, I have no doubt that the reason he gave out, viz. my non-residence, was only the pretence, and that the other was the true reason ; especially as it is the practice in many other instances to allow the non-residence of American officers who spend their salaries here, provided care is taken that the business be done by deputy or otherwise.

The first notice I had of this was from my fast friend, Mr. Cooper, secretary of the treasury. He desired me by a little note to call upon him there, which I did, when he told me, that the Duke of Grafton had mentioned to him some discourse of Lord Sandwich's as if the office suffered by my absence, and that it would be fit to appoint another, as I seemed constantly to reside in England : that Mr. Todd, the secretary of the post-office, had also been with the Duke, talking to the same purpose, &c. That the Duke had wished him (Mr. Cooper) to mention this to me, and to say to me at the same time that though my going to my post might remove the objection, yet if I chose rather to reside in England, my merit was such in his opinion, as to entitle me to something better here, and it should not be his fault if I was not well provided for. I told Mr. Cooper that without having heard any exception had been taken to my residence here, I was really preparing to return home, and expected to be gone in a few weeks. That, however, I was extremely sensible of the Duke's goodness in giving me this intimation, and very thankful for his favorable disposition towards me ; that having lived long in England,

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should have stayed till Monday, but for writing by these vessels. He assures me the duke has it at heart to do something handsome for me. Sir John Pringle, who is anxious for my stay, says Mr. Cooper is the honestest man of a courtier that he ever knew, and he is persuaded they are in earnest to keep me. The piece I wrote against smuggling in the Chronicle of November last, and one in April, on the laboring poor, (you will find the latter in the Gentleman's Magazine for that month)\* have been lately shown by Mr. Cooper to the chancellor of the exchequer, and to the duke, who have expressed themselves much pleased with them. I am to be again at the treasury on Tuesday next, by appointment of Mr. Cooper. Thus particular I have been, that you may judge of this affair. For my own thoughts, I must tell you, that though I did not think fit to decline any favor so great a man expressed an inclination to do me; because at court, if one shows an unwillingness to be obliged, it is often construed as a mark of mental hostility, and one makes an enemy; yet so great is my inclination to be at home, and at rest, that I shall not be sorry if this business falls through, and I am suffered to retire with my old post; nor indeed very sorry if they take that from me too, on account of my zeal for America, in which some of my friends have hinted to me I have been too open. I shall soon be able, I hope by the next packet, to give you farther light. In the mean time, as no one but Sir J. knows of the treaty, I talk daily of going in the August packet at furthest. And when the late Georgia appointment of me to be their agent is men-

\* See WRITINGS, Part II. for both these Essays.

tioned as what may detain me, I say, I have yet received no letters from that assembly, acquainting me what their business may be ; that I shall probably hear from them before that packet sails. That if it is extraordinary, and of such a nature as to make my stay another winter necessary, I may possibly stay, because there would not be time for them to choose another ; but if it is common business, I shall leave it with Mr. Jackson, and proceed. I do not, by the way, know how that appointment came about, having no acquaintance that I can recollect in that country. It has been mentioned in the papers some time, but I have only just now received a letter from Governor Wright, informing me that he had that day given his assent to it, and expressing his desire to correspond with me on all occasions, saying the committee, as soon as they could get their papers ready, would write to me and acquaint me with their business.

We have lost Lord Clare from the board of trade. He took me home from court, the Sunday before his removal, that I might dine with him as he said alone, and talk over American affairs. He seemed as attentive to them as if he was to continue ever so long. He gave me a great deal of flummery ; saying, that though at my examination I answered some of his questions a little pertly, yet he liked me from that day, for the spirit I showed in defence of my country ; and at parting, after we had drank a bottle and a half of claret each, he hugged and kissed me, protesting he never in his life met with a man he was so much in love with. This I write for your amusement. You see by the nature of this whole letter that it is to yourself only. It may serve to prepare

your mind for any event that shall happen. If Mr. Grenville comes into power again in any department respecting America, I must refuse to accept of any thing that may seem to put me in his power, because I apprehend a breach between the two countries ; and that refusal will give offence. So that you see a turn of a die may make a great difference in our affairs. We may be either promoted or discarded ; one or the other seems likely soon to be the case, but 'tis hard to divine which. I am myself grown so old as to feel much less than formerly the spur of ambition ; and if it were not for the flattering expectation, that by being fixed here I might more effectually serve my country, I should certainly determine for retirement without a moment's hesitation. I am, as ever, your affectionate father,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO JOSEPH GALLOWAY, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

London, July 2, 1768.

Since my last nothing material has occurred here relating to American affairs, except the removal of Lord Clare from the head of the board of trade to the treasury of Ireland, and the return of Lord Hillsborough to the board of trade as first commissioner, retaining the title and powers of secretary of state for the colonies. This change was very sudden and unexpected. My Lord Clare took me home from court to dine with him but two days before, saying he should be without other company, and wanted to talk with me on sundry American businesses. We had accordingly a good deal of conversation on our affairs, in which he seemed to interest himself with all the attention that could be supposed in a minister

who expected to continue in the management of them. This was on Sunday, and on the Tuesday following he was removed. Whether my Lord Hillsborough's administration will be more stable than others have been for a long time, is quite uncertain; but as his inclinations are rather favorable towards us (so far as he thinks consistent with what he supposes the unquestionable rights of Britain), I cannot but wish it may continue, especially as these perpetual mutations prevent the progress of all business.

But another change is now talked of that gives me great uneasiness. Several of the Bedford party being now got in, it has been for some time apprehended that they would sooner or later draw their friend Mr. Grenville in after them. It is now said, he is to be secretary of state in the room of Lord Shelburne. If this should take place, or if in any other shape he comes again into power, I fear his sentiments of the Americans, and theirs of him, will occasion such clashings as may be attended with fatal consequences.

The last accounts from your part of the world of the combinations relating to commerce with this country, and resolutions concerning the duties here laid upon it, occasion much serious reflection, and it is thought the points in dispute between the two countries will not fail to come under the consideration of parliament early next session. Our friends wonder that I persist in my intention of returning this summer, alleging that I might be of much more service to my country here than I can be there, and wishing me by all means to stay the ensuing winter, as the presence of persons well acquainted with America, and of ability to represent these affairs in a

proper light, will then be highly necessary. My private concerns, however, so much require my presence at home, that I have not yet suffered myself to be persuaded by their partial opinion of me.

The tumults and disorders that prevailed here lately have now pretty well subsided. Wilkes's outlawry is reversed; but he is sentenced to twenty-two months' imprisonment, and 1000*l.* fine, which his friends, who feared he would be pilloried, seem rather satisfied with. The importation of corn, a pretty good harvest, now near over, and the prospect of plenty from a fine crop of wheat, makes the poor more patient, in hopes of an abatement in the price of provisions; so that unless want of employment by the failure of American orders should distress them, they are like to be tolerably quiet.

I am, with sincere esteem, dear sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO \* \* \*

DEAR SIR,

London, Nov. 28, 1768.

Your sentiments of the importance of the present dispute between Great Britain and the colonies, appear to me extremely just. There is nothing I wish for more than to see it amicably and equitably settled.

But Providence will bring about its own ends by its own means; and if it intends the downfall of a nation, that nation will be so blinded by its pride, and other passions, as not to see its danger, or how its fall may be prevented.

Being born and bred in one of the countries, and having lived long and made many agreeable con-



nexions of friendship in the other, I wish all prosperity to both; but I have talked and written so much and so long on the subject, that my acquaintance are weary of hearing, and the public of reading any more of it, which begins to make me weary of talking and writing; especially as I do not find that I have gained any point, in either country, except that of rendering myself suspected, by my impartiality; in England, of being too much an *American*, and in America, of being too much an *Englishman*. Your opinion, however, weighs with me, and encourages me to try one effort more, in a full, though concise statement of facts, accompanied with arguments drawn from those facts, to be published about the meeting of parliament, after the holidays.\*

If any good may be done I shall rejoice; but at present I almost despair.

Have you ever seen the barometer so low as of late? The 22d instant mine was at 28. 41., and yet the weather fine and fair. With sincere esteem, I am, dear friend, yours affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO M. DUBOURG,† PARIS.

London, October 2, 1770.

I see with pleasure that we think pretty much alike on the subjects of English America. We of the colonies have never insisted that we ought to be exempt from contributing to the common expenses necessary to support the prosperity of the empire.

\* Uncertain what is the publication promised in this letter; possibly the one intitled "Causes of the American Discontents before 1768." See WRITINGS, Part 1.

† Translator of Dr. Franklin's Philosophical Works.

We only assert, that having parliaments of our own, and not having representatives in that of Great Britain, our parliaments are the only judges of what we can and what we ought to contribute in this case; and that the English parliament has no right to take our money without our consent. In fact, the British empire is not a single state; it comprehends many; and though the parliament of Great Britain has arrogated to itself the power of taxing the colonies, it has no more right to do so than it has to tax Hanover. We have the same king, but not the same legislatures.

The dispute between the two countries has already lost England many millions sterling, which it has lost in its commerce, and America has in this respect been a proportionable gainer. This commerce consisted principally of superfluities; objects of luxury and fashion, which we can do well without; and the resolution we have formed of importing no more till our grievances are redressed, has enabled many of our infant manufactures to take root; and it will not be easy to make our people abandon them in future, even should a connexion more cordial than ever succeed the present troubles. I have indeed no doubt that the parliament of England will finally abandon its present pretensions, and leave us to the peaceable enjoyment of our rights and privileges.

. TO GOVERNOR FRANKLIN.

DEAR SON,

London, August 17, 1772.

At length we have got rid of Lord Hillsborough, and Lord Dartmouth takes his place, to the great satisfaction of all the friends of America. You will

hear it said among you (I suppose) that the interest of the Ohio planters has ousted him; but the truth is, what I wrote you long since, that all his brother-ministers disliked him extremely and wished for a fair occasion of tripping up his heels; so seeing that he made a point of defeating our scheme, they made another of supporting it, on purpose to mortify him, which they knew his pride could not bear. I do not mean that they would have done this if they had thought our proposal bad in itself, or his opposition well founded; but I believe if he had been on good terms with them, they would not have differed with him for so small a matter. The K. too was tired of him, and of his administration, which had weakened the affection and respect of the colonies for a royal government, with which (I may say it to you) I used proper means from time to time that his M. should have due information and convincing proofs. More of this when I see you. The K.'s dislike made the others more firmly united in the resolution of disgracing H. by setting at nought his famous report. But now that business is done, perhaps our affair may be less regarded in the cabinet, and suffered to linger, and possibly may yet miscarry. Therefore let us beware of every word and action that may betray a confidence in its success, lest we render ourselves ridiculous in case of disappointment. We are now pushing for a completion of the business; but the time is unfavorable, every body gone or going into the country, which gives room for accidents. I am writing by Falconer, and therefore in this only add that I am ever your affectionate father,

B.<sup>c</sup> FRANKLIN,

P. S. The regard Lord D. has always done me the honor to express for me, gives me room to hope being able to obtain more in favor of our colonies upon occasion, than I could for some time past.

TO GOVERNOR FRANKLIN.

DEAR SON,

London, August 19, 1772.

As lord Hillsborough in fact got nothing out of me, I should rather suppose he threw me away as an orange that would yield no juice, and therefore not worth more squeezing. When I had been a little while returned to London I waited on him to thank him for his civilities in Ireland, and to discourse with him on a Georgia affair. The porter told me he was not at home. I left my card, went another time, and received the same answer, though I knew he was at home, a friend of mine being with him. After intermissions of a week each, I made two more visits, and received the same answer. The last time was on a levee day, when a number of carriages were at his door. My coachman driving up, alighted, and was opening the coach door, when the porter seeing me, came out, and surlily chid the coachman for opening the door before he had inquired whether my lord was at home; and then turning to me, said, "My lord is not at home." I have never since been nigh him, and we have only abused one another at a distance. The contrast, as you observe, is very striking between his conversation with the chief justice, and his letter to you concerning your province. I know him to be as double and deceitful as any man I ever met with. But we have done with him, I hope, for ever. His removal has I believe been meditated ever since the death of the princess dowager. For I recollect, that

on my complaining of him about that time to a friend at court, whom you may guess, he told me, we Americans were represented by Hillsborough as an unquiet people, not easily satisfied with any ministry; that however it was thought too much occasion had been given us to dislike the present: and asked me whether, if he should be removed, I could name another likely to be more acceptable to us. I said yes; there is Lord Dartmouth: we liked him very well when he was at the head of the board formerly, and probably should like him again. This I heard no more of; but I am pretty sure it was reported where I could wish it, though I know not that it had any effect.

As to my situation here nothing can be more agreeable, especially as I hope for less embarrassment from the new minister. A general respect paid me by the learned, a number of friends and acquaintance among them, with whom I have a pleasing intercourse; a character of so much weight, that it has protected me when some in power would have done me injury, and continued me in an office they would have deprived me of; my company so much desired, that I seldom dine at home in winter, and could spend the whole summer in the country-houses of inviting friends if I chose it. Learned and ingenious foreigners that come to England, almost all make a point of visiting me; for my reputation is still higher abroad than here; several of the foreign ambassadors have assiduously cultivated my acquaintance, treating me as one of their *corps*, partly I believe from the desire they have from time to time of hearing something of American affairs, an object become of importance in foreign courts, who begin to hope Britain's alarming

power will be diminished by the defection of her colonies; and partly that they may have an opportunity of introducing me to the gentlemen of their country who desire it. The K. too has lately been heard to speak of me with great regard. These are flattering circumstances; but a violent longing for home sometimes seizes me, which I can in no other-wise subdue but by promising myself a return next spring or next autumn, and so forth. As to returning hither, if I once go back, I have no thoughts of it. I am too far advanced in life to propose three voyages more. I have some important affairs to settle at home; and considering my double expenses here and there, I hardly think my salaries fully compensate the disadvantages. The late change however being thrown into the balance determines me to stay another winter.

P.S. August 22. I find I omitted congratulating you on the honor of your election in the society for propagating the gospel. There you match indeed my Dutch honor. But you are again behind; for last night I received a letter from Paris, of which the enclosed is an extract, acquainting me that I am chosen *associé étranger* (foreign member) of the royal academy there. There are but eight of these *associés étrangers* in all Europe, and those of the most distinguished names for science. The vacancy I have the honor of filling was made by the death of the late celebrated M. Van Sweeten, of Vienna. This mark of respect from the first academy in the world, which Abbé Nolet, one of its members, took so much pains to prejudice against my doctrine, I consider as a kind of victory without ink-shed, since I never answered him. I am told he has but one of his sect now re-

maining in the academy. All the rest, who have in any degree acquainted themselves with electricity, are, as he calls them, *Franklinists*. Yours, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO JOSEPH GALLOWAY.

DEAR FRIEND, Philadelphia, August 22, 1772.

Lord Hillsborough, mortified by the committee of council's approbation of our grant in opposition to his report, has resigned. I believe when he offered to do so, he had such an opinion of his importance, that he did not think it would be accepted; and that it would be thought prudent rather to set our grant aside than part with him. His colleagues in the ministry were all glad to get rid of him, and perhaps for this reason joined more readily in giving him that mortification. Lord Dartmouth succeeds him, who has much more favorable dispositions towards the colonies. He has heretofore expressed some personal regard for me, and I hope now to find our business with the board more easy to transact.

Your observations on the state of the islands did not come to hand till after lord Rochford had withdrawn his petition. His lordship and the promoters of it were so roasted on the occasion, that I believe another of the kind will not very soon be thought of. The proprietor was at the expense of the opposition; and as I knew it would not be necessary, and thought it might be inconvenient to our affairs, I did not openly engage in it; but I gave some private assistance, that I believe was not without effect: I think too that Mr. Jackson's opinion was of great service. I would lodge a copy of your paper in the plantation office against any similar future applications if you

approve of it. I only think the island holders make too great a concession to the crown when they suppose it may have a right to quit-rent. It can have none in my opinion on the old grants from Indians, Swedes, and Dutch, where none was reserved. And I think those grants so clearly good as to need no confirmation, to obtain which I suppose is the only motive for offering such quit-rent. I imagine too, that it may not be amiss to affix a caveat in the plantation office, in the behalf of holders of property in those islands, against any grant of them that may be applied for, till they have had timely notice and an opportunity of being fully heard. I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO JOSEPH GALLOWAY, ESQ.

DEAR FRIEND,

London, Dec. 2, 1772.

I am glad you are returned again to a seat in the assembly, where your abilities are so useful and necessary in the service of your country. We must not, in the course of *public* life expect *immediate* approbation and *immediate* grateful acknowledgment of our services. But let us persevere through abuse and even injury. The internal satisfaction of a good conscience is always present, and time will do us justice in the minds of the people, even those at present the most prejudiced against us.

I see by a Pennsylvania Gazette of October 21, that you are continued speaker, and myself agent; but I have no line from you or the committee relative to instructions. Perhaps I shall hear from you by Falconer. I find myself upon very good terms with our new minister Lord Dartmouth, who, we have



reason to think, means well to the colonies. I believe all are now sensible that nothing is to be got by contesting with, or oppressing us. Two circumstances have diverted me lately. One was, that being at the court of exchequer on some business of my own, I there met with one of the commissioners of the stamp office, who told me he attended with a memorial from that board, to be allowed in their accounts the difference between their expense in endeavoring to establish those offices in America, and the amount of what they received, which from Canada and the West India islands was but about 150Q/., while the expense, if I remember right, was above 12,000/., being for stamps and stamping, with paper and parchment returned upon their hands, freight, &c. The other is the present difficulties of the India company, and of government on their account. The company have accepted bills, which they find themselves unable to pay, though they have the value of two millions, in tea and other India goods, in their stores, perishing under a want of demand. Their credit thus suffering, and their stock falling 120 per cent., whereby the government will lose the 400,000/ per annum, it having been stipulated that it should no longer be paid if the dividend fell to that mark. And although it is known that the American market is lost by continuing the duty on tea, and that we are supplied by the Dutch, who doubtless take the opportunity of smuggling other India goods among us with the tea, so that for the five years past we might probably have otherwise taken off the greatest part of what the company have on hand, and so have prevented their present embarrassment, yet the honor of government is sup-

posed to forbid the repeal of the American tea-duty ; while the amount of all the duties goes on decreasing, so that the balance of this year does not (as I have it from good authority) exceed 80/. after paying the collection ; not reckoning the immense expense of guarda costas, &c. Can an American help smiling at these blunders ? though in a national light they are truly deplorable.

With the sincerest esteem, and inviolable attachment, I am, my dear friend, ever most affectionately  
yours,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THOMAS CUSHING, ESQ.

SIR,

London, Dec. 2, 1772.

A few days after my leaving your petition with Lord Dartmouth, his lordship sent for me to discourse with me upon it. After a long audience he was pleased to say, that notwithstanding all I had said, or could say, in support and justification of the petition, he was sure the presenting it at this time could not possibly produce any good : that the king would be exceedingly offended, but what steps his majesty would take upon it was uncertain ; perhaps he would require the opinion of the judges or government lawyers, which would surely be against us ; perhaps he might lay it before parliament, and so the censure of both houses would be drawn down upon us : the most favorable thing to be expected was, a severe reprimand to the assembly by order of his majesty, the natural consequence of which must be more discontent and uneasiness in the province. That possessed as he was with great good-will for New England, he was extremely unwilling that one of the first acts of his administration, with regard to

Massachusetts, should be of so unpleasant a nature. That minds had been heated and irritated on both sides the water; but he hoped those heats were now cooling, and he was averse to the addition of fresh fuel; that, as I had delivered the petition to him officially, he must present it if I insisted upon it; but he wished I would first consult my constituents, who might possibly, on reconsideration, think fit to order its being deferred. I answered that the great majority with which the petition, and the resolves on which it was founded, were carried through the house, made it scarce expectable that their order would be countermanded; that the slighting, evading, or refusing to receive petitions from the colonies on some late occasions by the parliament, had occasioned a total loss of the respect for, and confidence in, that body formerly subsisting so strongly in America, and brought on a questioning of their authority: that his lordship might observe that petitions came no more from that country to parliament, but to the king only: that the king appeared to be now the only connexion between the two countries; and that as a continued union was essentially necessary to the well-being of the whole empire, I should be sorry to see that link weakened as the other had been; that I thought it a dangerous thing for any government to refuse receiving petitions, and thereby prevent the subjects from giving vent to their griefs. His lordship interrupted me by replying that he did not refuse to deliver the petition; that it should never justly be said of him, that he interrupted the complaints of his majesty's subjects, and that he must and would present it, as he had said before, whenever I should absolutely require it; but from

motives of pure good-will to the province, he wished me not to insist on it, till I should receive fresh orders. Finally, considering that since the petition was ordered there had been a change in the American administration; that the present minister was our friend in the repeal of the stamp act, and seems still to have good dispositions towards us; that you had mentioned to me the probability that the house would have remonstrated on all their other grievances, had not their time been taken up with the difficult business of a general valuation; and since the complaint of this petition was likely alone to give offence, it might perhaps be judged advisable to give the substance of all our complaints at once, rather than in parts, and after a reprimand received; I say, upon the whole, I thought it best not to disoblige him in the beginning of his administration, by refusing him what he seemed so desirous of, a delay at least in presenting the petition, till farther directions should be received from my constituents. If after deliberation they should send me fresh orders, I shall immediately obey them, and the application to the crown itself may possibly derive greater weight, from the re-consideration given it, while the temper of the house may be somewhat calmed by the removal of a minister who had rendered himself so obnoxious to them. Accordingly I consented to the delay desired, wherein I hope my conduct will not be disapproved.

With the greatest esteem and respect, I have the honor to be, sir, your and the committee's most obedient and most humble servant, B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE HON. THOMAS CUSHING, ESQ.

SIR, (Private)

London, Jan. 5, 1773.

I did myself the honor of writing to you on the 2d of December past, enclosing some original letters\* from persons in Boston, which I hope got safe to hand. I have since received your favor of October 27, which containing in a small compass so full an enumeration of our grievances, the steps necessary to remove them, and the happy effects that must follow, I thought that, though marked *private*, it might be of use to communicate it to Lord Dartmouth; the rather too, as he would there find himself occasionally mentioned with proper respect, and learn that his character was esteemed in the colonies. Accordingly I wrote him a few lines, and enclosed it a day or two before I was to wait on his lordship, that he might have a little time to consider the contents. When I next attended him, he returned me the letter with great complacence in his countenance; said he was glad to find that people in America were disposed to think so favorably of him; that they did him but justice in believing he had the best disposition towards them, for he wished sincerely their welfare, though possibly he might not always think with them as to the means of obtaining that end. That the heads of complaint in your letter were many, some of them requiring much consideration, and therefore it could scarce be expected that a sudden change should be made in so many measures, supposing them all improper to be continued, which perhaps might not be the case. It was

\* Governor Hutchinson's Letters. See MEMOIRS of THE LIFE, Part III. p. 186, 4to ed.

however his opinion, that if the Americans continued quiet, and gave no fresh offence to government, those measures would be reconsidered, and such relief given as, upon consideration, should be thought reasonable. I need not remark there is not much in such general discourse; but I could then obtain nothing more particular, except that his lordship expressed in direct terms his disapprobation of the instruction for exempting the colonies from taxation: which however was, as he said in confidence to me, relying that no public mention should be made of his opinion on that head.

In the mean time, some circumstances are working in our favor with regard to the duties. It is found by the last year's accounts transmitted by the commissioners, that the balance in favor of Britain is but about £85, after payment of salaries, &c. exclusive of the charge of a fleet to enforce the collection. Then it is observed that the India Company is so out of cash, that it cannot pay the bills drawn upon it, and its other debts, and at the same time so out of credit, that the bank does not care to assist them, whence they find themselves obliged to lower their dividend; the apprehension of which has sunk their stock from 280 to 160, whereby several millions of property are annihilated, occasioning private bankruptcies and other distress, besides a loss to the public treasury of £400,000 per annum, which the company are not to pay into it as heretofore, if they are not able to keep up their dividend at 12½. And as they have, at the same time, tea, and other India goods in their warehouses, to the amount of four millions, as some say, for which they want a market, and which, if it had been sold, would have kept up their credit, I

take the opportunity of remarking in all companies the great imprudence of losing the American market by keeping up the duty on tea, which has thrown that trade into the hands of the Dutch, Danes, Swedes and French, who, according to the reports and letters of some custom-house officers in America, now supply by smuggling the whole continent, not with tea only, but accompany that article with other India goods, amounting, as supposed, in the whole to £500,000 sterling per annum. This gives some alarm, and begins to convince people more and more of the impropriety of quarreling with America, who, at that rate, might have taken off two millions and a half of those goods, within these five years, that the combination has subsisted, if the duty had not been laid, or had been speedily repealed.

But our great security lies, I think, in our growing strength both in numbers and wealth, that creates an increasing ability of assisting this nation in its wars, which will make us more respectable, our friendship more valued, and our enmity feared: thence it will soon be thought proper to treat us not with justice only, but with kindness, and thence we may expect in a few years a total change of measures with regard to us; unless by a neglect of military discipline we should lose all martial spirit, and our western people become as tame as those in the eastern dominions of Britain, when we may expect the same oppressions, for there is much truth in the Italian saying, *Make yourselves sheep, and the wolves will eat you.* In confidence of this coming change in our favor, I think our prudence is meanwhile to be quiet, only holding up our rights and claims on all occasions in resolutions, memorials, and remon-

strances ; but bearing patiently the little present notice that is taken of them. They will all have their weight in time, and that time is at no great distance.

With the greatest esteem, I have the honor to be,  
sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO GOVERNOR FRANKLIN.

DEAR SON,

London, Feb. 14, 1773.

The opposition are now attacking the ministry on the St. Vincent's affair, which is generally condemned here, and some think Lord Hillsborough will be given up as the adviser of that expedition. But if it succeeds, perhaps all will blow over. The ministry are more embarrassed with the Indian affairs ; the continued refusal of North America to take tea from this country has brought infinite distress on the company : they imported great quantities in faith that that agreement could not hold ; and now they can neither pay their debts nor dividends, their stock has sunk to the annihilating near three millions of their property, and government will lose its £400,000 a year ; while their teas lie on hand : the bankruptcies brought on partly by this means have given such a shock to credit as has not been experienced here since the South-Sea year. And this has affected the great manufacturers so much, as to oblige them to discharge their hands ; and thousands of Spital-fields and Manchester weavers are now starving, or subsisting on charity. Blessed effects of pride, pique, and passion in government, which should have no passions.

Yours, B. FRANKLIN.



TO THE HON. THOMAS CUSHING, ESQ. BOSTON.

SIR,

London, March 9, 1773.

Governor Hutchinson's speech, at the opening of your January session, has been printed and industriously circulated here by (as I think) the ministerial people, which I take to be no good sign. The assembly's answer to it is not yet arrived, and in the meanwhile it seems to make impression on the minds of many not well acquainted with the dispute. The tea duty however is under the consideration of parliament, for a repeal on a petition from the East India Company, and no new measures have been talked of against America, as likely to be taken during the present session; I was therefore preparing to return home by the spring ships: but have been advised by our friends to stay till the session is over; as the commission sent to Rhode Island and discontents in your province, with the correspondence of the towns may possibly give rise to something here, when my being on the spot may be of use to our country. I conclude to stay a little longer. In the mean time I must hope that great care will be taken to keep our people quiet, since nothing is more wished for by our enemies, than that by insurrections we should give a good pretence for increasing the military among us, and putting us under more severe restraints. And it must be evident to all, that by our rapidly increasing strength we shall soon become of so much importance that none of our just claims of privilege will be as heretofore unattended to, nor any security we can wish for our rights be denied us.

With great respect I have the honor to be, sir,  
your most obedient humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE HON. THOMAS CUSHING, ESQ.

SIR, (Private) London, April 3, 1773.

My last was of the 9th past; since which nothing material has occurred relating to the colonies. The assembly's answer to Governor Hutchinson's speech is not yet come over; but I find that even his friends here are apprehensive of some ill consequences from his forcing the assembly into that dispute, and begin to say it was not prudently done, though they believe it meant well. I inclose you two newspapers in which it is mentioned. Lord Dartmouth the other day expressed his wish to me, that some means could be fallen upon to heal the breach. I took the freedom to tell him, that he could do much in it if he would exert himself; I think I see signs of relenting in some others. The Bishop of St. Asaph's sermon before the Society for propagating the Gospel, is much talked of for its catholic spirit and favorable sentiments relating to the colonies. I will endeavor to get a copy to send you. With great esteem and respect, I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO GOVERNOR FRANKLIN.

DEAR SON,

London, April 6, 1773.

I have sent to Mr. Galloway one of the Bishop of St. Asaph's\* sermons for your Society for propagating the Gospel. I would have sent you one, but you will receive it of course as a member. It contains such liberal and generous sentiments relating to the conduct of government here towards America, that Sir J. Pringle says it was written in compliment

\* Dr. Shipley's.

to me. But from the intimacy of friendship in which I live with the author, I know he has expressed nothing but what he thinks and feels; and I honor him the more, that through the mere hope of doing good, he has hazarded the displeasure of the court, and of course the prospect of further preferment. Possibly indeed the ideas of the court may change; for I think I see some alarm at the discontents in New England, and some appearance of softening in the disposition of government, on the idea that matters have been carried too far there. But all depends upon circumstances and events. We govern from hand to mouth. There seems to be no wise regular plan.

I saw Lord Dartmouth about two weeks since. He mentioned nothing to me of your application for additional salary, nor did I to him, for I do not like it. I fear it will embroil you with your people.

While I am writing, comes to hand yours of March 2. My letter by the October packet must have been sent as usual to the office by the bellman. That being, as you inform me, rubbed open, as some of yours to me have been, gives an additional circumstance of probability to the conjecture made in mine of December 2. For the future I shall send letters of consequence to the office (when I use the packet conveyance) by my clerk.

Your accounts of the numbers of people, births, burials, &c. in your province, will be very agreeable to me, and particularly so to Dr. Price. Compared with former accounts, they will show the increase of your people, but not perfectly, as I think a great many have gone from New Jersey to the more southern colonies.

The parliament is like to sit till the end of June, as Mr. Cooper tells me. I had thoughts of returning home about that time. The Boston assembly's answer to the governor's speech, which I have just received, may possibly produce something here to occasion my longer stay. I am, your affectionate father,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE HON. THOMAS CUSHING, ESQ.

SIR,

(Private.)

London, May 6, 1773.

The council and assembly's answer to Governor Hutchinson's speech I caused to be printed here as soon as I received them. His reply I see since printed also, but their rejoinder is not yet come. If he intended by reviving that dispute to recommend himself, he has greatly missed his aim; for the administration are chagrined with his officiousness, their intention having been to let all contention subside, and by degrees suffer matters to return to the old channel. They are now embarrassed by his proceedings; for if they lay the governor's dispatches containing the declaration of the general court before parliament, they apprehend measures may be taken that will widen the breach; which would be more particularly inconvenient at this time, when the disturbed state of Europe gives some apprehensions of a general war; on the other hand, if they do not lay them before parliament they give advantage to opposition against themselves on some future occasion, in a charge of criminal neglect. Some say he must be a fool, others that through some misinformation he really supposed Lord Hillsborough to be again in office.

Yesterday I had a conversation with Lord D., of

which I think it right to give you some account. On my saying that I had no late advices from Boston, and asking if his lordship had any, he said, 'None since the governor's second speech; but what difficulties that gentleman has brought us all into by his imprudence! though I suppose he meant well:—yet what can now be done? It is impossible that parliament can suffer such a declaration of the general assembly, asserting its independency, to pass unnoticed.' 'In my opinion,' said I, 'it would be better and more prudent to take no notice of it. It is *words* only. Acts of parliament are still submitted to there. No force is used to obstruct their execution. And while that is the case, parliament would do well to turn a deaf ear, and seem not to know that such declarations had ever been made. Violent measures against the province will not change the opinion of the people. Force could do no good.' 'I do not know,' said he, 'that force would be thought of; but perhaps an act may pass to lay them under some inconveniencies till they rescind that declaration. Can they not withdraw it? I wish they could be persuaded to reconsider the matter, and do it of themselves voluntarily, and thus leave things between us on the old footing, the points undiscussed. Don't you think,' continued his lordship, 'such a thing possible?' 'No, my lord,' said I, 'I think it is impossible. If they were even to wish matters back in the situation before the governor's speech, and the dispute obliterated, they cannot withdraw their answers till he first withdraws his speech, which methinks would be an awkward operation that perhaps he will hardly be directed to perform. As to an act of parliament laying that country under inconveni-

encies, it is likely that will only put them as heretofore on some method of incommoding this country till the act is repealed; and so we shall go on injuring and provoking each other, instead of cultivating that good-will and harmony so necessary to the general welfare.' He said, 'that might be, and he was sensible our divisions must weaken the whole; for we are yet *one empire*,' said he, 'whatever may be the sentiments of the Massachusetts assembly, but he did not see how that could be avoided. He wondered, as the dispute was now of public notoriety, parliament had not already called for the dispatches; and he thought he could not omit much longer the communicating them, however unwilling he was to do it, from his apprehension of the consequences. But what,' his lordship was pleased to say, 'if you were in my place, would or could you do? Would you hazard the being called to account in some future session of parliament, for keeping back the communication of dispatches of such importance?' I said his lordship could best judge, what in his situation was fittest for him to do. 'I could only give my poor opinion with regard to parliament, that supposing the dispatches laid before them, they would act most prudently in ordering them to lie on the table, and take no further notice of them. For were I as much an Englishman as I am an American, and ever so desirous of establishing the authority of parliament, I protest to your lordship I cannot conceive a single step the parliament can take to increase it, that will not tend to diminish it; and after abundance of mischief they must finally lose it. The loss in itself perhaps would not be of much consequence, because it is an autho-

city they can never well exercise for want of due information and knowledge, and therefore it is not worth hazarding the mischief to preserve it.' Then adding my wishes that I could be of any service in healing our differences, his lordship said, 'I do not see any thing of more service than prevailing on the general assembly, if you can do it, to withdraw their answers to the governor's speech.' 'There is not,' said I, 'the least probability they will ever do that; for the country is all of one mind upon the subject. Perhaps the governor may have represented to your lordship, that these are the opinions of a party only, and that great numbers are of different sentiments, which may in time prevail. But if he does not deceive himself he deceives your lordship: for in both houses, notwithstanding the influence appertaining to his office, there was not, in sending up those answers, a single dissenting voice.' 'I do not recollect,' said his lordship, 'that the governor has written any thing of that kind. I am told, however, by gentlemen from that country, who pretend to know it, that there are many of the governor's opinion, but they dare not show their sentiments.' 'I never heard,' said I, 'that any one has suffered violence for siding with the governor.' 'Not violence, perhaps,' said his lordship, 'but they are reviled and held in contempt, and people do not care to incur the disesteem and displeasure of their neighbors.' As I knew Governor Bernard had been in with his lordship just before me, I thought he was probably one of these gentlemen informants, and therefore said, people who are engaged in any party or have advised any measures are apt to magnify the numbers of those they would have understood as approv-

ing their measures. His lordship said, that was natural to suppose might be the present case; for whoever observed the conduct of parties here, must have seen it a constant practice; and he agreed with me, that though a *nemine contradicente* did not prove the absolute agreement of every man in the opinion voted, it at least demonstrated the great prevalence of that opinion.

Thus ended our conference. I shall watch this business till the parliament rises, and endeavor to make people in general as sensible of the inconveniences to this country that may attend a continuance of the contest, as the Spitalfields weavers seem already to be in their petition to the king, which I herewith send you. I have already the pleasure to find that my friend the Bishop of St. Asaph's sermon is universally approved and applauded, which I take to be no bad symptom. With sincere esteem and respect, I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE HON. THOMAS CUSHING, ESQ.

SIR,

London, June 2, 1773.

Since my last of the 6th past, I have been honored with yours of March 6 and 24, enclosing a petition to the king, and a letter to Lord Dartmouth. On considering the whole, I concluded that a longer delay of presenting the first petition and remonstrance was not likely to answer any good purpose, and therefore immediately waited on Lord Dartmouth, and delivered to him the letter, and the second petition, at the same time re-delivering the first, and pressed his lordship to present them to his



majesty, which he promised to do. Enclosed I send you the answer I have just received from him, as this day's packet (the mail for which is to be made up and dispatched in a few hours) is the earliest opportunity, the ships for Boston not being to sail till the beginning of next week. By one of them I shall send a copy, with what observations occur to me on the occasion, which the time will not now permit me to write. In the mean while I would just beg leave to say, that I hope the house will come to no hasty resolves upon it. The longer they deliberate, the more maturely they consider, the greater weight will attend their resolutions. With sincere respect, I am, sir, your most obedient humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE HON. THOMAS CUSHING, ESQ.

SIR,

London, June 4, 1773.

It was thought at the beginning of the session that the American duty on tea would be taken off. But now the wise scheme is to take off so much duty here, as will make tea cheaper in America than foreigners can supply us, and to confine the duty there to keep up the exercise of the right. They have no idea that any people can act from any other principle but that of interest; and they believe that three-pence in a pound of tea, of which one does not perhaps drink ten pounds in a year, is sufficient to overcome all the patriotism of an American.

I purpose soon to write to you very fully. As to the letters I communicated to you,\* though I have not been able to obtain leave to take copies or pub-

\* Governor Hutchinson's.

lish them, I have permission to let the originals remain with you as long as you may think it of any use to have them in possession. With great esteem and respect, I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE HON. THOMAS CUSHING, ESQ.

SIR,

London, July 7, 1773.

I thank you for the pamphlets you have sent me, containing the controversy between the governor and the two houses. I have distributed them where I thought they might be of use. He makes perhaps as much of his argument as it will bear; but has the misfortune of being on the weak side, and so is put to shifts and quibbles, and the use of much sophistry and artifice to give plausibility to his reasonings. The council and the assembly have greatly the advantage in point of fairness, perspicuity and force. His precedents of acts of parliament binding the colonies, and our tacit consent to those acts, are all frivolous. Shall a guardian who has imposed upon, cheated, and plundered a minor under his care, who was unable to prevent it, plead those impositions after his ward has discovered them, as precedents and authorities for continuing them? There have been precedents time out of mind for robbing on Hounslow Heath, but the highwayman who robbed there yesterday does nevertheless deserve hanging.

I am glad to see the resolves of the Virginia house of burgesses. There are brave spirits among that people. I hope their proposal will be readily complied with by all the colonies. It is natural to suppose, as you do, that if the oppressions continue, a

congress may grow out of that correspondence. Nothing would more alarm our ministers ; but, if the colonies agree to hold a congress, I do not see how it can be prevented.

The instruction relating to the exemption of the commissioners I imagine is withdrawn ; perhaps the other also, relating to the agents ; but of that I have heard nothing. I only wonder that the governor should make such a declaration of his readiness to comply with an intimation in acting contrary to any instructions, if he had not already, or did not soon expect, a repeal of those instructions. I have not, and never shall use your name on this or any similar occasion.

I note your directions relating to public and private letters, and shall not fail to observe them. At the same time I think all the correspondence should be in the speaker's power, to communicate such extracts only as he should think proper for the house. It is extremely embarrassing to an agent to write letters concerning his transactions with ministers, which letters he knows are to be read in the house, where there may be governors' spies who carry away parts, or perhaps take copies, that are echoed back hither privately, if they should not be, as sometimes they are, printed in the votes. It is impossible to write freely in such circumstances, unless he would hazard his usefulness, and put it out of his power to do his country any farther service. I speak this now, not upon my own account, being about to decline all public business, but for your consideration with regard to future agents.

And now we speak of agents, I must mention my concern that I should fall under so severe a censure

of the house as that of neglect in their business. I have submitted to the reproof without reply in my public letter, out of pure respect. It is not decent to dispute a father's admonitions. But to you in private, permit me to observe, that as to the two things I am blamed for not giving the earliest notice of, viz. the clause in the act relating to dock-yards, and the appointment of salaries for the governor and judges; the first only seems to have some foundation. I did not know, but perhaps I ought to have known, that such a clause was intended. And yet in a parliament, that during the whole session refused admission to strangers, wherein near two hundred acts were passed, it is not so easy a matter to come at the knowledge of every clause in every act, and to give opposition to what may affect one's constituents, especially when it is not uncommon to smuggle clauses into a bill whose title shall give no suspicion, when an opposition to such clauses is apprehended. I say this is no easy matter. But had I known of this clause, it is not likely I could have prevented its passing in the present disposition of government towards America, nor do I see that giving earlier notice of its having passed could have been of much service. As to the other, concerning the governor and judges, I should hardly have thought of sending the house an account of it, if the minister had mentioned it to me, as I understood from their first letter that they had already the best intelligence "of its being determined by administration to bestow large salaries on the attorney-general, judges, and governor of the province." I could not, therefore, possibly "give the *first notice* of this impending evil." I answered, however, "that there was no doubt of

the intention of making governors, and some other officers, independent of the people for their support, and that this purpose will be persisted in, if the American revenue is found sufficient to defray the salaries. This censure, though grievous, does not so much surprise me, as I apprehended all along from the beginning, that between the friends of an old agent, my predecessor, who thought himself hardly used in his dismissal, and those of a young one impatient for the succession, my situation was not likely to be a very comfortable one, as my faults could scarce pass unobserved.

I think of leaving England in September. As soon as possible after my arrival in America, I purpose (God willing) to visit Boston, when I hope to have the pleasure of paying my respects to you. I shall then give every information in my power, and offer every advice relating to our affairs, (not so convenient to be written) that my situation here for so many years may enable me to suggest for the benefit of our country. Some time before my departure, I shall put your papers into the hands of Mr. Lee, and assist him with my counsel while I stay where there may be occasion for it. He is a gentleman of parts and ability, and though he cannot exceed me in sincere zeal for the interest and prosperity of the province, his youth will easily enable him to serve it with more activity.

I am, sir, very respectfully, your obliged and most obedient humble servant,  
B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE HON. THOMAS CUSHING, ESQ.

SIR,

London, July 7, 1773.

The parliament is at length prorogued without

meddling with the state of America. Their time was much employed in the East India business; and perhaps it was not thought prudent to lay before them the advices from New England, though some threatening intimations had been given of such an intention. The king's firm answer (as it is called) to our petitions and remonstrances, has probably been judged sufficient for the present. I forwarded that answer to you by the last packet, and sent a copy of it by a Boston ship the beginning of last month. Therein we are told "that his majesty has well weighed the *subject matter*, and the expressions contained in those petitions; and, that as he will ever attend to the *humble* petitions of his subjects, and be forward to redress every *real* grievance, so he is determined to support *the constitution*, and resist with firmness every attempt to derogate from the authority of the *supreme legislature*."

By this it seems that some exception is taken to the *expressions* of the petitions as not sufficiently humble, that the grievances complained of are not thought *real* grievances, that parliament is deemed the supreme legislature, and its authority over the colonies supposed to be the *constitution*. Indeed the last idea is expressed more fully in the next paragraph, where the words of the act are used declaring the right of the crown, with the advice of parliament, to make laws of *sufficient force and validity* to bind its subjects in America in all cases *whatsoever*.

When one considers the king's situation, surrounded by ministers, counsellors, and judges learned in the law, who are all of this opinion, and reflect how necessary it is for him to be well with his parliament, from whose yearly grants his fleets and

armies are to be supported, and the deficiencies of his civil list supplied, it is not to be wondered at that he should be firm in an opinion established, as far as an act of parliament could establish it, by even the friends of America at the time they repealed the stamp act; and which is so generally thought right by his lords and commons, that any act of his, countenancing the contrary, would hazard his embroiling himself with those powerful bodies. And hence it seems hardly to be expected from him that he should take any step of that kind. The grievous instructions indeed might be withdrawn without their observing it, if his majesty thought fit so to do; but under the present prejudices of all about him, it seems that this is not yet likely to be advised.

The question then arises, how are we to obtain redress? If we look back into the parliamentary history of this country we shall find, that in similar situations of the subjects here, redress could seldom be obtained but by withholding aids when the sovereign was in distress, till the grievances were removed. Hence the rooted custom of the commons to keep money-bills in their own disposition, not suffering even the lords to meddle in grants, either as to quantity, manner of raising, or even in the smallest circumstance. This country pretends to be collectively our sovereign. It is now deeply in debt. Its funds are far short of recovering their par since the last war: another would distress it still more. Its people diminish as well as its credit. Men will be wanted as well as money. The colonies are rapidly increasing in wealth and numbers. In the last war they maintained an army

of 25,000. A country able to do that is no contemptible ally. In another war they may perhaps do twice as much with equal ease. Whenever a war happens our aid will be wished for, our friendship desired and cultivated, our good-will courted : then is the time to say, *redress our grievances*. You take money from us by force, and now you ask it of voluntary grant. You cannot have it both ways. If you choose to have it without our consent, you must go on taking it that way, and be content with what little you can so obtain. If you would have our free gifts, desist from your compulsive methods, and acknowledge our rights, and secure our future enjoyment of them. Our claims will then be attended to, and our complaints regarded. By what I perceived not long since, when a war was apprehended with Spain, the different countenance put on by some great men here towards those who were thought to have a little influence in America, and the language that began to be held with regard to the then minister for the colonies, I am confident that if that war had taken place he would have been immediately dismissed, all his measures reversed, and every step taken to recover our affection and procure our assistance. Thence I think it fair to conclude, that similar effects will probably be produced by similar circumstances.

But as the strength of an empire depends not only on the *union* of its parts, but on their *readiness* for united exertion of their common force ; and, as the discussion of rights may seem unseasonable in the commencement of actual war, and the delay it might occasion be prejudicial to the common welfare ; as likewise the refusal of one or a few colonies would



not be so much regarded if the others granted liberally, which perhaps by various artifices and motives they might be prevailed on to do; and as this want of concert would defeat the expectation of general redress that otherwise might be justly formed, perhaps it would be best and fairest for the colonies in a general congress now in peace to be assembled, (or by means of the correspondence lately proposed) after a full and solemn assertion and declaration of their rights, to engage firmly with each other, that they will never grant aids to the crown in any general war till those rights are recognised by the king and both houses of parliament; communicating at the same time to the crown this their resolution. Such a step, I imagine, will bring the dispute to a crisis: and whether our demands are immediately complied with, or compulsory measures thought of to make us rescind them, our ends will finally be obtained; for even the odium accompanying such compulsory attempts will contribute to unite and strengthen us, and in the mean time all the world will allow that our proceeding has been honorable.

No one doubts the advantage of a strict union between the mother-country and the colonies, if it may be obtained and preserved on equitable terms. In every fair connexion each party should find its own interest. Britain will find hers in our joining with her in every war she makes, to the greater annoyance and terror of her enemies; in our employment of her manufacturers, and enriching her merchants by our commerce; and her government will feel some additional strengthening of its hands, by the disposition of our profitable posts and places.

On our side we have to expect the protection she can afford us, and the advantage of a common umpire in our disputes, thereby preventing wars we might otherwise have with each other; so that we can without interruption go on with our improvements, and increase our numbers. We ask no more of her, and she should not think of forcing more from us. By the exercise of prudent moderation on her part, mixed with a little kindness; and by a decent behavior on ours, excusing where we can excuse from a consideration of circumstances, and bearing a little with the infirmities of her government as we would with those of an aged parent, though firmly asserting our privileges, and declaring that we mean at a proper time to vindicate them, this advantageous union may still be long continued. We wish it, and we may endeavor it, but God will order it as to his wisdom shall seem most suitable. The friends of liberty here wish we may long preserve it on our side the water, that they may find it there if adverse events should destroy it here. They are therefore anxious and afraid lest we should hazard it by premature attempts in its favor. They think we may risk much by violent measures, and that the risk is unnecessary, since a little time must infallibly bring us all we demand or desire, and bring it us in peace and safety. I do not presume to advise. There are many wiser men among you, and I hope you will be directed by a still superior wisdom.

With regard to the sentiments of people in general here, concerning America, I must say that we have among them many friends and wellwishers. The dissenters are all for us, and many of the merchants and manufacturers. There seems to be even among

the country gentlemen a general sense of our growing importance, a disapprobation of the harsh measures with which we have been treated, and a wish that some means may be found of perfect reconciliation. A few members of parliament in both houses, and perhaps some in high office, have in a degree the same ideas, but none of these seem willing as yet to be active in our favor, lest adversaries should take advantage and charge it upon them as a betraying the interests of this nation. In this state of things no endeavor of mine, or our other friends here, "to obtain a repeal of the acts so oppressive to the colonists, or the orders of the crown so destructive of the charter rights of our province in particular," can expect a sudden success. By degrees, and a judicious improvement of events, we may work a change in minds and measures, but otherwise such great alterations are hardly to be looked for.

I am thankful to the house for their kind attention in repeating their grant to me of six hundred pounds. Whether the instruction restraining the governor's assent is withdrawn or not, or is likely to be, I cannot tell, having never solicited, or even once mentioned it to Lord Dartmouth, being resolved to owe no obligation to the favor of any minister. If, from a sense of right, that instruction should be recalled, and the general principle on which it was founded is given up, all will be very well: but you can never think it worth while to employ an agent here, if his being paid or not is to depend on the breath of a minister; and I should think it a situation too suspicious, and therefore too dishonorable, for me to remain in a single hour. Living frugally, I am under

no immediate necessity; and, if I serve my constituents faithfully, though it should be unsuccessfully, I am confident they will always have it in their inclination, and some time or other in their power, to make their grants effectual.

A gentleman of your province, Captain Calef, is come hither as an agent for some of the eastern townships, to obtain a confirmation of their lands. Sir Francis Bernard seems inclined to make use of this person's application for promoting a separation of that country from your province, and making it a distinct government; to which purpose he prepared a draft of a memorial for Calef to present, setting forth not only the hardship of being without security in the property of their improvements, but also of the distress of the people there for want of government; that they were at too great a distance from the seat of government in the Massachusetts to be capable of receiving the benefits of government thence, and expressing their willingness to be separated and formed into a new province, &c. With this draft Sir Francis and Mr. Calef came to me to have my opinion. I read it, and observed to them, that though I wished the people quieted in their possessions, and would do any thing I could to assist in obtaining the assurance of their property, yet as I knew the province of Massachusetts had a right to that country, of which they were justly tenacious, I must oppose that part of the memorial, if it should be presented. Sir Francis allowed the right, but proposed that a great tract of land between Merrimack and Connecticut rivers, which had been allotted to New Hampshire, might be restored to the province by order of the crown, as a compensation.

This he said would be of more value to us than that eastern country, as being nearer home, &c. I said I would mention it in my letters, but must in the mean time oppose any step taken in the affair before the sentiments of the general court should be known, as to such an exchange, if it were offered. Mr. Calef himself did not seem fond of the draft, and I have not seen him, or heard any thing farther of it since, but I shall watch it.

Be pleased to present my dutiful respects to the house, and believe me with sincere and great esteem, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE REV. DR. MATHER, BOSTON.

REVEREND SIR,

London, July 7, 1773.

The remarks you have added, on the late proceedings against America, are very just and judicious; and I cannot see any impropriety in your making them, though a minister of the gospel. This kingdom is a good deal indebted for its liberties to the public spirit of its ancient clergy, who joined with the barons in obtaining Magna Charta, and joined heartily in forming the curses of excommunication against the infringers of it. There is no doubt but the claim of parliament, of authority to make laws *binding on the colonies in all cases whatsoever*, includes an authority to change our religious constitution, and establish Popery or Mahometanism, if they please, in its stead; but, as you intimate, *power* does not infer *right*; and as the right is nothing, and the *power* (by our increase) continually diminishing, the one will soon be as insignificant as the *other*. You seem only to have made a small mistake in supposing

they modestly avoided to declare they had a right, the words of the act being "that they have, and of *right* ought to have, full power," &c.

Your suspicion that sundry others besides Governor Bernard "had written hither their opinions and counsels, encouraging the measures to the prejudice of our country, which have been too much heeded and followed," is, I apprehend, but too well founded. You call them "traitorous individuals," whence I collect, that you suppose them of our own country. There was among the twelve apostles one traitor who betrayed with a kiss. It should be no wonder, therefore, if among so many thousand true patriots as New England contains, there should be found even twelve Judases, ready to betray their country for a few paltry pieces of silver. Their *ends*, as well as their views, ought to be similar. But all the oppressions evidently work for our good. Providence seems by every means intent on making us a great people. May our virtues, public and private, grow with us, and be durable, that liberty, civil and religious, may be secured to our posterity, and to all, from every part of the world, that take refuge among us!

With great esteem, and my best wishes for a long continuance of your usefulness, I am, reverend sir, your most obedient humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO DR. COOPER, BOSTON.

DEAR SIR,

London, July 7, 1773.

The governor was certainly out in his politics, if he hoped to recommend himself there by entering upon that dispute with the assembly. His imprudence in bringing it at all upon the tapis, and his bad

management of it, are almost equally censured. The council and assembly, on the other hand, have, by the coolness, clearness, and force of their answers, gained great reputation.

The unanimity of our towns in their sentiments of liberty, gives me great pleasure, as it shows the generally enlightened state of our people's minds, and the falsehood of the opinion much cultivated here by the partisans of arbitrary power in America, that only a small faction among us were discontented with the late measures. If that unanimity can be discovered in all the colonies, it will give much greater weight to our future remonstrances. I heartily wish with you, that some line could be drawn, some bill of rights established for America, that might secure peace between the two countries, so necessary for the prosperity of both. But I think little attention is like to be afforded by our ministers to that salutary work till the breach becomes greater and more alarming, and then the difficulty of repairing it will be greater in a tenfold proportion.

You mention the surprise of gentlemen to whom those letters\* have been communicated, at the restrictions with which they were accompanied, and which they suppose render them incapable of answering any important end. One great reason of forbidding their publication, was an apprehension that it might put all the possessors of such correspondence here upon their guard, and so prevent the obtaining more of it. And it was imagined that showing the originals to so many as were named, and to a few such others as they might think fit,

\* Governor Hutchinson's.

would be sufficient to establish the authenticity, and to spread through the province so just an estimation of the writers, as to strip them of all their deluded friends, and demolish effectually their interest and influence. The letters might be shown even to some of the governor's and lieutenant-governor's partisans, and spoken of to every body; for there was no restraint proposed to talking of them, but only to copying. However, the terms given with them could only be those with which they were received.

The great defect here is in all sorts of people a want of attention to what passes in such remote countries as America, an unwillingness to read anything about them if it appears a little prolix; and a disposition to postpone the consideration even of the things they know they must at last consider, that so they may have time for what more immediately concerns them, and withal enjoy their amusements, and be undisturbed in the universal dissipation. In other respects, though some of the great regard us with a jealous eye, and some are angry with us, the majority of the nation rather wish us well, and have no desire to infringe our liberties. And many console themselves under the apprehension of declining liberty here, that they or their posterity shall be able to find her safe and vigorous in America. With sincere and great esteem, I am, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO GOVERNOR FRANKLIN.

DEAR SON,

London, July 14, 1773.

I am glad to find that you have been able to assist Josiah Davenport a little; but vexed that he and you should think of putting me upon a sollicita-



tion which it is impossible for me to engage in. I am not upon terms with Lord North to ask any such favor from him. Displeased with something he said relating to America, I have never been at his levees, since the first. Perhaps he has taken that amiss. For last week we met occasionally at Lord Le Despencer's in our return from Oxford, where I had been to attend the solemnity of his installation, and he seemed studiously to avoid speaking to me. I ought to be ashamed to say that on such occasions I feel myself to be as proud as any body. His lady indeed was more gracious. She came, and sat down by me on the same sofa, and condescended to enter into a conversation with me agreeably enough, as if to make some amends. Their son and daughter were with them. They staid all night, so that we dined, supped, and breakfasted together, without exchanging three sentences. But had he ever so great a regard for me, I could not ask that office, trifling as it is, for any relation of mine. And detesting as I do the whole system of American customs, believing they will one day bring on a breach through the indiscretion and insolence of those concerned in the collection, I should never wish to see one so near to me in that business. If you think him capable of acting as deputy secretary, I imagine you might easily obtain that for him of Mr. Morgan. He has lately been with me, is always very complaisant, and understanding I was about returning to America, requested my interest to obtain for him the *agency for your province*. His friend Sir Watkin Lewes, who was formerly candidate for the same *great place*, is now high sheriff of London, and in the way of being lord mayor. The new sheriffs elect

are (could you think it?) both Americans, viz. Mr. Sayre, the New Yorker, and Mr. W. Lee, brother to Dr. Lee. I am glad you stand so well with Lord Dartmouth. I am likewise well with him; but he never spoke to me of augmenting your salary. He is truly a good man, and wishes sincerely a good understanding with the colonies, but does not seem to have strength equal to his wishes. Between you and me, the late measures have been, I suspect, very much the king's own, and he has in some cases a great share of what his friends call *firmness*. Yet, by some pains-taking and proper management, the wrong impressions he has received may be removed, which is perhaps the only chance America has for obtaining *soon* the redresses she aims at. This entirely to yourself.

And now we are among great folks, let me tell you a little of Lord Hillsborough. I went down to Oxford with and at the instance of Lord Le Despencer, who is, on all occasions, very good to me, and seems of late very desirous of my company. Mr. Todd, too, was there, who has some attachment to Lord H., and in a walk we were taking told me, as a secret, that Lord H. was much chagrined at being out of place, and could never forgive me for "writing that pamphlet against his report about the Ohio. I assured him, said Mr. T., that I knew you did not write it; and the consequence is, that he thinks I know the contrary, and wanted to impose upon him in your favor; and so I find he is now displeased with me, and for no other cause in the world. His friend Bamber Gascoine too, says that they *well knew* it was written by Dr. F., who was one of the most mischievous men in England." That same day

Lord H. called upon Lord Le D., whose chamber and mine were together in Queen's College. I was in the inner room shifting, and heard his voice, but did not see him, as he went down stairs immediately with Lord Le D., who, mentioning that I was above, he returned directly, and came to me in the pleasantest manner imaginable. "Dr. F.," said he, "I did not know till this minute that you were here, and I am come back *to make you my bow*. I am glad to see you at Oxford, and that you look so well," &c. In return for this extravagance I complimented him on his son's performance on the theatre, though indeed it was but indifferent; so that account was settled. For as people say when they are angry, if he *strikes me*, I'll strike him again, I think sometimes it may be right to say, *if he flatters me, I'll flatter him again*. This is *lex talionis*, returning offences in kind. His son, however, (Lord Fairford) is a valuable young man, and his daughters, Ladies Mary and Charlotte, most amiable young women. My quarrel is only with him, who of all the men I ever met with is surely the most unequal in his treatment of people, the most insincere, and the most wrong-headed; witness, besides his various behavior to me, his duplicity in encouraging us to ask for more land: ask for *enough to make a province*, (when we at first asked only for 2,500,000 acres,) were his words; pretending to befriend our application, then doing every thing to defeat it, and reconciling the first to the last by saying to a friend, that he meant to defeat it from the beginning; and that his putting us upon asking so much was with that very view, supposing it too much to be granted. Thus by the way, his mortification becomes double. He has served us by

the very means he meant to destroy us, and tript up his own heels into the bargain. Your affectionate father,  
B. FRANKLIN.

TO MR. WINTHROP, BOSTON.

DEAR SIR,

London, July 25, 1773.

I am glad to see that you are elected into the council, and are about to take part in our public affairs. Your abilities, integrity, and sober attachment to the liberties of our country, will be of great use in this tempestuous time, in conducting our little bark into safe harbor. By the Boston newspapers, there seems to be among us some violent spirits, who are for an immediate rupture. But I trust the general prudence of our countrymen will see, that by our growing strength we advance fast to a situation in which our claims must be allowed; that by a premature struggle we may be crippled and kept down another age; that as between friends every affront is not worth a duel, between nations every injury is not worth a war, so between the governed and governing every mistake in government, every encroachment on right is not worth a rebellion. It is in my opinion sufficient for the present that we hold them forth on all occasions, not giving up any of them, using at the same time every means to make them generally understood and valued by the people; cultivating a harmony among the colonies, that their union in the same sentiments may give them greater weight; remembering withal, that this protestant country, (our mother, though lately an unkind one) is worth preserving, and that her weight in the scale of Europe, and her safety in a great degree may depend on our union with her. Thus conducting, I am con-

fidest we may in a few years obtain every allowance of, and every security for, our inestimable privileges, that we can wish or desire. With great and sincere esteem, I am,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE HON. THOMAS CUSHING, ESQ.

SIR,

London, July 25, 1773.

I am favored with yours of June 14 and 16, containing some copies of the resolves of the committee upon the letters.\* I see by your account of the transaction, that you could not well prevent what was done. As to the report of other copies being come from England, I know that could not be. It was expedient to disengage the house. I hope the possession of the originals, and the proceedings upon them, will be attended with salutary effects to the province, and then I shall be well pleased.

I observe that you mention that no person besides Dr. Cooper and one of the committee knew they came from me. I did not accompany them with any request of being myself concealed; for believing what I did to be in the way of my duty as agent, though I had no doubt of its giving offence, not only to the parties exposed, but to administration here, I was regardless of the consequences. However, since the letters themselves are now copied and printed, contrary to the promise I made, I am glad my name has not been heard on the occasion; and as I do not see it could be of any use to the public, I now wish it may continue unknown; though I hardly expect it. As to yours, you may rely on my never mentioning it, except that I may be obliged to show your letter in my own vindication to the per-

\* Governor Hutchinson's.

son only who might otherwise think he had reason to blame *me* for breach of engagement. It must surely be seen here, that after such a detection of their duplicity in pretending a regard and affection to the province while they were undermining its privileges, it is impossible for the crown to make any good use of their services, and that it can never be for its interest to employ servants who are under such universal odium. The consequence one would think should be their removal. But perhaps it may be to *titles* or to *pensions*—if your revenue can pay them.

I am, with great esteem, sir, your most obedient  
humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO DR. COOPER, BOSTON.

DEAR SIR,

London, July 25, 1773.

I am glad to know your opinion that those letters came seasonably, and may be of public utility. I accompanied them with no restriction relating to myself; my duty to the province as their agent, I thought required the communication of them, as far as I could: I was sensible I should make enemies there, and perhaps might offend government here; but those apprehensions I disregarded. I did not expect, that my sending them could be kept a secret: but since it is such hitherto, I now wish it may continue so, because the publication of the letters contrary to my engagement, has changed the circumstances. If they serve to diminish the influence and demolish the power of the parties whose correspondence has been, and probably would have continued to be, so mischievous to the interest and rights of the province, I shall on that account be more easy under any in-

conveniencies I may suffer either here or there ; and shall bear as well as I can the imputation of not having taken sufficient care to insure the performance of my promise.

I think government can hardly expect to draw any future service from such instruments, and one would suppose they must soon be dismissed. We shall see.

I hope to be favored with a continuance of your correspondence and intelligence, while I stay here ; it is highly useful to me, and will be, as it always has been, pleasing every where.

I am ever, dear sir, your obliged and most obedient humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE HON. THOMAS CUSHING, ESQ.

SIR,

London, Aug. 24, 1773.

My Lord Dartmouth being at his country seat in Staffordshire, I transmitted to him the address for the removal of the governor and lieutenant-governor ; and Mr. Bollan and I jointly transmitted the letter to his lordship from both houses. I delivered to Mr. Bollan one set of the authenticated copies of the letters, and we shall co-operate in the business we are charged with.

I am told that the governor has requested leave to come home ; that some great persons about the court do not think the letters, now they have seen them, a sufficient foundation for the resolves ; that therefore it is not likely he will be removed, but suffered to resign, and that some provision will be made for him here. But nothing I apprehend is likely to be done soon, as most of the great officers of state who composed the privy council, are in the country, and likely to

continue till the present parliament meets, and perhaps the above may be chiefly conjecture.

I have informed Mr. Lee, that in case there should be a hearing, I was directed to engage him as council for the province ; that though I had received no money, I would advance what might be necessary ; those hearings by council being expensive.

I purpose writing to you again by the packet, and am, with the greatest respect, sir, your most obedient humble servant,  
B. FRANKLIN.

TO GOVERNOR FRANKLIN.

DEAR SON,

London, Sept. 1, 1773.

Dr. Cooper of New York's opinion of the author of the sermon, however honorable to me, is injurious to the good bishop ; and therefore I must say in justice and truth, that I knew nothing of his intention to preach on the subject, and saw not a word of the sermon till it was printed. Possibly some preceding conversation between us may have turned his thoughts that way ; but if so, that is all.

I think the resolutions of the New England townships must have the effect they seem intended for ; viz. to show that the discontents were really general, and their sentiments concerning their rights unanimous, and not the fiction of a few demagogues, as their governors used to represent them here ; and therefore not useless, though they should not as yet induce government to acknowledge their claims. That people may probably think it sufficient for the present to assert and hold forth their rights, secure that sooner or later they must be admitted and acknowledged. The declaratory law here, had too its use, viz. to prevent or lessen at least a clamor against



the ministry that repealed the stamp act, as if they had given up the right of this country to govern America. Other use indeed it could have none; and I remember Lord Mansfield told the lords, when upon that bill, that it was nugatory. To be sure, in a dispute between two parties about rights, the declaration of one party can never be supposed to bind the other.

It is said there is now a project on foot to form an union with Ireland, and that Lord Harcourt is to propose it at the next meeting of the Irish parliament. The eastern side of Ireland are averse to it; supposing that when Dublin is no longer the seat of their government, it will decline, the harbor being but indifferent, and that the western and southern ports will rise and flourish on its ruins, being good in themselves and much better situated for commerce. For these same reasons, the western and southern people are inclined to the measure, and it is thought it may be carried. But these are difficult affairs, and usually take longer time than the projectors imagine. Mr. Crowley, the author of several proposals for uniting the colonies with the mother-country, and who runs about much among the ministers, tells me, the union of Ireland is only the first step towards a general union. He is for having it done by the parliament of England without consulting the colonies; and he will warrant, he says, that if the terms proposed are equitable, they will all come in one after the other. He seems rather a little cracked upon the subject.

It is said here that the famous Boston \* letters

\* Governor Hutchinson's.

were sent chiefly, if not all, to the late Mr. Whately. They fell into my hands, and I thought it my duty to give some principal people there a sight of them, very much with this view, that when they saw the measures they complained of took their rise, in a great degree, from the representations and recommendations of their own countrymen, their resentment against Britain on account of those measures might abate, as mine had done, and a reconciliation be more easily obtained. In Boston they concealed who sent them, the better to conceal who received and communicated them. And perhaps it is as well that it should continue a secret. Being of that country myself, I think those letters more heinous than you seem to think them ; but you had not read them all, nor perhaps the council's remarks on them. I have written to decline their agency on account of my return to America. Dr. Lee succeeds me. I only keep it while I stay, which perhaps will be another winter.

I grieve to hear of the death of my good old friend Dr. Evans. I have lost so many, since I left America, that I begin to fear I shall find myself a stranger among strangers when I return. If so, I must come again to my friends in England. I am ever your affectionate father,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE HON. THOMAS CUSHING, ESQ.

SIR,

London, Sept. 12, 1773.

To avoid repealing the American tea duty, and yet find a vent for tea, a project is executing to send it from this country on account of the East India Company, to be sold in America, agreeable to a late act empowering the lords of the treasury to grant

licences to the company to export tea thither, under certain restrictions, duty-free. Some friends of government (as they are called), of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, &c. are to be favored with the commission, who undertake by their interest to carry the measure through in the colonies. How the other merchants thus excluded from the tea trade will like this, I cannot foresee. Their agreement, if I remember right, was not to import tea, till the duty shall be repealed. Perhaps they will think themselves still obliged by that agreement notwithstanding this temporary expedient; which is only to introduce the tea for the present, and may be dropped next year, and the duty again required; the granting or refusing such licence from time to time remaining in the power of the treasury. And it will seem hard, while their hands are tied, to see the profits of that article all engrossed by a few particulars.

Enclosed I take the liberty of sending you a small piece of mine, written to expose, in as striking a light as I could, to the nation, the absurdity of the measures towards America, and to spur the ministry, if possible, to a change of those measures.

Please to present my duty to the house, and respects to the committee. I have the honor to be, with much esteem, sir, your most obedient humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

[*Enclosed in the foregoing letter.*]

A PRUSSIAN EDICT, &c.

Dantzic, September 5, 1773.

We have long wondered here at the supineness of the *English* nation, under the *Prussian* impositions upon its trade entering our port. We did not, till lately, know the claims, ancient and modern, that hang over that nation; and there-

fore could not suspect that it might submit to those impositions from a sense of duty, or from principles of equity. The following edict, just made public, may, if serious, throw some light upon this matter:

‘FREDERICK, by the grace of God, King of Prussia, &c. &c. &c. to all present and to come: health. The peace now enjoyed throughout Our dominions having afforded us leisure to apply Ourselves to the regulation of commerce, the improvement of Our finances, and at the same time the easing Our *domestic* subjects in their taxes: for these causes, and other good considerations Us thereunto moving, We hereby make known, that, after having deliberated these affairs in Our council; present Our dear brothers, and other great officers of the state, members of the same; We, of Our certain knowledge, full power, and authority royal, have made and issued this present edict, viz.

‘Whereas it is well known to all the world, that the first *German* settlements made in the island of Britain, were by colonies of people, subjects to Our renowned ducal ancestors, and drawn from their dominions, under the conduct of Hengist, Horsa, Hella, Uffa, Cerdicus, Ida, and others: and that the said colonies have flourished under the protection of Our august house, for ages past; have never been emancipated therefrom; and yet have hitherto yielded little profit to the same: And whereas We Ourselves have in the last war fought for and defended the said colonies, against the power of France, and thereby enabled them to make conquests from the said power in America; for which we have not yet received adequate compensation: And whereas it is just and expedient that a revenue should be raised from the said colonies in Britain, towards Our indemnification; and that those who are descendants of Our ancient subjects, and thence still owe Us due obedience, should contribute to the replenishing of our royal coffers; (as they must have done, had their ancestors remained in the territories now to us appertaining:) We do therefore hereby ordain and command, That, from and after the date of these presents, there shall be levied, and paid to Our officers of the *customs*, on all goods, wares, and

merchandises, and on all grain and other produce of the earth, exported from the said island of Britain, and on all goods of whatever kind imported into the same, a duty of four and a half per cent. ad valorem, for the use of Us and Our successors. And that the said duty may more effectually be collected, We do hereby ordain, that all ships or vessels bound from Great Britain to any other part of the world, or from any other part of the world to Great Britain, shall in their respective voyages touch at our port of Koningsberg, there to be unladen, searched, and charged with the said duties.

‘ And whereas there hath been from time to time discovered in the said island of Great Britain, by Our colonists there, many mines or beds of *iron-stone*; and sundry subjects of Our ancient dominion, skilful in converting the said stone into metal, have in time passed transported themselves thither, carrying with them and communicating that art; and the inhabitants of the said island, presuming that they had a natural right to make the best use they could of the natural productions of their country, for their own benefit, have not only built furnaces for smelting the said stone into iron, but have erected plating-forges, slitting-mills, and steel-furnaces, for the more convenient manufacturing of the same; thereby endangering a diminution of the said manufacture in Our ancient dominion; We do therefore hereby farther ordain, That, from and after the date hereof, no mill or other engine for slitting or rolling of iron, or any plating-forge to work with a tilt-hammer, or any furnace for making steel, shall be erected or continued in the said island of Great Britain: and the Lord Lieutenant of every county in the said island is hereby commanded, on information of any such erection within his county, to order, and by force to cause the same to be abated and destroyed; as he shall answer the neglect thereof to Us at his peril. But We are nevertheless graciously pleased to permit the inhabitants of the said island to transport their iron into Prussia, there to be manufactured, and to them returned; they paying Our Prussian subjects for the workmanship, with all the costs of commis-

sion, freight and risk, coming and returning; any thing herein contained to the contrary notwithstanding.

‘We do not, however, think fit to extend this Our indulgence to the article of *wool*; but meaning to encourage not only the manufacturing of woollen cloth, but also the raising of wool, in Our ancient dominions; and to prevent both, as much as may be, in Our said island, We do hereby absolutely forbid the transportation of wool thence even to the mother-country, Prussia:—And that those islanders may be farther and more effectually restrained in making any advantage of their own wool, in the way of manufacture, We command that none shall be carried out of one county into another; nor shall any worsted, bay, or woollen-yarn, cloth, says, bays, kerseys, serges, frizes, druggets, cloth-serges, shalloons, or any other drapery stuffs, or woollen manufactures whatsoever, made up or mixed with wool in any of the said counties, be carried into any other county, or be water-borne even across the smallest river or creek; on penalty of forfeiture of the same, together with the boats, carriages, horses, &c. that shall be employed in removing them. Nevertheless, Our loving subjects there are hereby permitted (if they think proper) to use all their wool as manure, for the improvement of their lands.

‘And whereas the art and mystery of making *hats* hath arrived at great perfection in Prussia; and the making of hats by Our remoter subjects ought to be as much as possible restrained: And forasmuch as the islanders before mentioned, being in possession of wool, beaver, and other furs, have presumptuously conceived they had a right to make some advantage thereof, by manufacturing the same into hats, to the prejudice of Our domestic manufacture:—We do therefore hereby strictly command and ordain, that no hats or felts whatsoever, dyed or undyed, finished or unfinished, shall be loaden or put into or upon any vessel, cart, carriage, or horse; to be transported or conveyed out of one county in the said island into another county, or to any other place whatsoever, by any person or persons whatsoever; on pain of forfeiting the same, with a penalty of five hundred pounds sterling for

every offence. Nor shall any hat-maker, in any of the said counties, employ more than two apprentices, on penalty of five pounds sterling per month: We intending hereby that such hat-makers, being so restrained, both in the production and sale of their commodity, may find no advantage in continuing their business. But, lest the said islanders should suffer inconveniency by the want of hats, We are farther graciously pleased to permit them to send their beaver furs to Prussia; and We also permit hats made thereof to be exported from Prussia to Britain; the people thus favored to pay all costs and charges of manufacturing interest, commission to Our merchants, insurance and freight going and returning; as in the case of iron.

‘ And lastly, being willing farther to favor our said colonies in Britain, We do hereby also ordain and command, that all the *thieves*, highway and street robbers, housebreakers, forgers, murderers, s—d—tes, and villains of every denomination, who have forfeited their lives to the law in Prussia; but whom We, in our great clemency, do not think fit here to hang; shall be emptied out of Our gaols into the said island of Great Britain, for the better peopling of that country.

‘ We flatter ourselves that these Our royal regulations and commands will be thought *just and reasonable* by Our much-favored colonists in England; the said regulations being copied from their statutes of 10 and 11 Will. III. c. 10.—5 Geo. II. c. 22.—23 Geo. II. c. 29.—4 Geo. I. c. 11. and from other equitable laws made by their parliaments; or from instructions given by their princes, or from resolutions of both houses, entered into for the good government of their *own colonies in Ireland and America*.

‘ And all persons in the said island are hereby cautioned not to oppose in any wise the execution of this Our edict, or any part thereof, such opposition being high treason; of which all who are suspected shall be transported in fetters from Britain to Prussia, there to be tried and executed according to the Prussian law.

‘ Such is Our pleasure.

‘ Given at Potsdam, this twenty-fifth day of the month of

August, One thousand seven hundred and seventy-three, and in the thirty-third year of Our reign. By the King in his council,  
'RECHTMÆSSIG, Sec.'

Some take this edict to be merely one of the king's *jeux d'esprit*; others suppose it serious, and that he means a quarrel with England: but all here think the assertion it concludes with, 'that these regulations are copied from acts of the *English* parliament respecting their colonies,' a very injurious one; it being impossible to believe, that a people distinguished for their love of liberty, a nation so wise, so liberal in its sentiments, so just and equitable towards its neighbors; should, from mean and injudicious views of petty immediate profit, treat its own children in a manner so arbitrary and tyrannical.

TO GOVERNOR FRANKLIN.

DEAR SON,

London, Oct. 6, 1773.

I know not what letters of mine governor Hutchinson could mean, as advising the people to insist on their independency. But whatever they were, I suppose he has sent copies of them hither, having heard some whisperings about them. I shall, however, be able at any time to justify every thing I have written; the purport being uniformly this, that they should carefully avoid all tumults and every violent measure, and content themselves with verbally keeping up their claims, and holding forth their rights whenever occasion requires; secure that, from the growing importance of America, those claims will ere long be attended to and acknowledged. From a long and thorough consideration of the subject, I am indeed of opinion that the parliament has no right to make any law whatever binding on the colonies;



that the king (and not the king, lords and commons collectively,) is their sovereign; and that the king, with their respective parliaments, is their only legislator. I know your sentiments differ from mine on these subjects. You are a thorough government man, which I do not wonder at, nor do I aim at converting you. I only wish you to act uprightly and steadily, avoiding that duplicity which in Hutchinson adds contempt to indignation. If you can promote the prosperity of your people, and leave them happier than you found them, whatever your political principles are, your memory will be honored.

I have written two pieces here lately for the Public Advertiser, on American affairs, designed to expose the conduct of this country towards the colonies, in a short, comprehensive, and striking view, and stated therefore in out-of-the-way forms, as most likely to take the general attention. The first was called *rules by which a great empire may be reduced to a small one*;\* the second, *an edict of the king of Prussia*. I sent you one of the first, but could not get enough of the second to spare you one, though my clerk went the next morning to the printer's and wherever they were sold. They were all gone but two. In my own mind I preferred the first as a composition, for the quantity and variety of the matter contained, and a kind of spirited ending of each paragraph. But I find that others here generally prefer the second. I am not suspected as the author except by one or two friends; and have heard the latter spoken of in the highest terms as the keenest and severest piece that has appeared here a long time.

\* See WRITINGS, Part II.

Lord Mansfield, I hear, said of it, that it *was very* ABLE *and very* ARTFUL indeed; and would do mischief by giving here a bad impression of the measures of government, and in the colonies by encouraging them in their contumacy. It is reprinted in the Chronicle, where you will see it, but stripped of all the capitalling and italicking, that intimate the allusions and mark the emphasis of written discourses, to bring them as near as possible to those spoken: printing such a piece all in one even small character, seems to me like repeating one of Whitfield's sermons in the monotony of a school-boy. What made it the more noticed here was, that people in reading it, were, as the phrase is, *taken in*, till they had got half through it, and imagined it a real edict; to which mistake I suppose the king of Prussia's *character* must have contributed. I was down at Lord Le Despencer's when the post brought that day's papers. Mr. Whitehead was there too, (Paul Whitehead, the author of *Manners*,) who runs early through all the papers, and tells the company what he finds remarkable. He had them in another room, and we were chatting in the breakfast parlor, when he came running into us, out of breath, with the paper in his hand. Here! said he, here's news for ye! *Here's the king of Prussia claiming a right to this kingdom!* All stared, and I as much as any body; and he went on to read it. When he had read two or three paragraphs, a gentleman present said, *Damn his impudence! I dare say we shall hear by next post that he is upon his march with 100,000 men to back this.* Whitehead, who is very shrewd, soon after began to smoke it, and looking in my face said, *I'll be hanged if this is not some of your American jokes upon us.* The read-

ing went on, and ended with abundance of laughing, and a general verdict that it was a fair hit. And the piece was cut out of the paper and preserved in my lord's collection.

I don't wonder that Hutchinson should be dejected. It must be an uncomfortable thing to live among people who he is conscious universally detest him. Yet I fancy he will not have leave to come home, both because they know not well what to do with him, and because they do not very well like his conduct. I am ever your affectionate father,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE HON. THOMAS CUSHING, ESQ.

SIR,

London, Nov. 1, 1773.

In my own opinion the letter of the two houses of the 29th June, proposing as a satisfactory measure the restoring things to the state in which they were at the conclusion of the late war, is a fair and generous offer on our part, and my discourse here is, that it is more than Britain has a right to expect from us; and that if she has any wisdom left she will embrace it, and agree with us immediately; for that the longer she delays the accommodation which finally she must for her own sake obtain, the worse terms she may expect, since the inequality of power and importance that at present subsists between us is daily diminishing, and our sense of our own rights and of her injustice continually increasing. I am the more encouraged to hold such language, by perceiving that the general sense of the nation is for us; a conviction prevailing that we have been ill used, and that a breach with us would be ruinous to this country. The pieces I wrote to increase and

strengthen those sentiments were more read, and talked of, and attended to than usual. The first, as you will see by the enclosed, has been called for, and reprinted in the same paper, besides being copied in others, and in the magazines. A long labored answer has been made to it, (by governor Bernard it is said,) which I send you. I am told it does not satisfy those in whose justification it was written, and that a better is preparing. I think with you that great difficulties must attend an attempt to make a new representation of our grievances, in which the point of right should be kept out of sight, especially as the concurrence of so many colonies seems now necessary. And therefore it would certainly be best and wisest for parliament (which does not meet till after the middle of January) to make up the matter themselves, and at once reduce things to the state desired. There are not wanting some here who believe this will really be the case; for, that a new election being now in view, the present members are likely to consider the composing all differences with America, as a measure agreeable to the trading and manufacturing part of the nation; and that the neglecting it may be made use of by their opponents to their disadvantage.

I have as yet received no answer to the petition for removing the governors. I imagine that it will hardly be complied with, as it would embarrass government to provide for them otherwise; and it will be thought hard to neglect men who have exposed themselves by adhering to what is here called the interest and rights of this country. But this I only conjecture, as I have heard nothing certain about it. Indeed I should think continuing them in

their places would be rather a punishment than a favor. For what comfort can men have in living among a people with whom they are the object of universal odium?

I shall continue here one winter longer, and use my best endeavors as long as I stay for the service of our country. With great esteem, I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO JOSEPH GALLOWAY, ESQ. PHILADELPHIA.

SIR,

London, Nov. 3, 1773.

There is at present great quietness here, and no prospect that the war between the Turks and Russians will spread further in Europe. The last harvest is allowed to have been generally plentiful in this country; and yet such was the preceding scantiness of crops, that it is thought there is no corn to spare for exportation, which continues the advantages to our corn provinces.

The parliament is not to meet till after the middle of January. It is said there is a disposition to compose all differences with America before the next general election; as the trading and manufacturing part of the nation are generally our well-wishers, think we have been hardly used, and apprehend ill consequences from a continuance of the measures that we complain of; and that if those measures are not changed, an American interest may be spirited up at the election against the present members who are in, or friends to, administration. Our steady refusal to take tea from hence for several years past has made its impressions. The scheme for supplying us without repealing the act, by a temporary licence

from the treasury to export tea to America free of duty, you are before this time acquainted with. I much want to hear how that tea is received. If it is rejected, the act will undoubtedly be repealed : otherwise I suppose it will be continued ; and when we have got into the use of the company's tea, and the foreign correspondences that supply us at present are broken off, the licences will be discontinued, and the act enforced.

I apprehend the better understanding that lately subsisted in our provincial administration will hardly be continued with the new governor ; but you will soon see. I wish for the full letter you promise me by the next packet, which is now daily expected. With unalterable esteem and attachment, I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO GOVERNOR FRANKLIN.

DEAR SON,

London, Nov. 3, 1773.

I wrote you pretty fully by the last packet, and having had no line from you of later date than the beginning of August, and little stirring here lately, I have now little to write.

In that letter\* I mentioned my having written two papers, of which I preferred the first, but the public the last. It seems I was mistaken in judging of the public opinion ; for the first† was reprinted some weeks after in the same paper, the printer giving for reason that he did it in compliance with the earnest request of many private persons, and some respectable societies ; which is the more extraordinary, as it had been copied in several other papers, and in the

\* October 6, 1773.

† Rules for reducing a great empire to a small one.

Gentleman's Magazine. Such papers may seem to have a tendency to increase our divisions, but I intend a contrary effect, and hope by comprising in little room, and setting in a strong light the grievances of the colonies, more attention will be paid to them by our administration, and that when their unreasonableness is generally seen, some of them will be removed, to the restoration of harmony between us.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE HON. THOMAS CUSHING, ESQ.

SIR,

London, January 5, 1774.

I waited on Lord Dartmouth on his return to town, and learnt that he had presented to his majesty our petition for the removal of the governors. No subsequent step had yet been taken upon it: but his lordship said, the king would probably refer the consideration of it to a committee of council, and that I should have notice to be heard in support of it. By the turn of his conversation, though he was not explicit, I apprehend the petition is not likely to be complied with: but we shall see. His lordship expressed, as usual, much concern at the differences subsisting, and wished they could be accommodated. Perhaps his good wishes are all that is in his power.

The famous letters\* having unfortunately engaged Mr. Temple and Mr. Whately in a duel, which being interrupted would probably be renewed, I thought it incumbent on me to prevent, as far as I could, any farther mischief, by declaring publicly the part I had in the affair of those letters, and thereby, at the same time to rescue Mr. Temple's character from an unde-

\* Governor Hutchinson's.

served and groundless imputation, that bore hard upon his honor, viz. that of taking the letters from Mr. Whately, and in breach of confidence. I did this with the more pleasure, as I believe him a sincere friend to our country. I am told by some that it was imprudent in me to avow the obtaining and sending those letters, for that administration will resent it. I have not much apprehension of this, but if it happens I must take the consequences. I only hope it will not affect any friend on your side the water, for I have never mentioned *to whom* they were transmitted.\*

A letter of mine to you, printed in one of the Boston papers, has lately been reprinted here, to show, as the publisher expresses it, that I am "*one of the most determined enemies of the welfare and prosperity of Great Britain.*" In the opinion of some, every one who wishes the good of the *whole empire* may nevertheless be an enemy to *the welfare of Great Britain*, if he does not wish its good *exclusively* of every other *part*; and to see its welfare built on their servitude and wretchedness. Such an enemy I certainly am. But methinks 'tis wrong to print letters of mine at Boston which give occasion to these reflections.

I shall continue to do all I possibly can this winter towards an accommodation of our differences; but my hopes are small. Divine providence first infatuates the power it designs to ruin.

With the greatest esteem and respect, I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

\* See Dr. Franklin's account of the whole of the transactions incident to these letters, in the *Memoirs of his Life*, Part III.



TO GOVERNOR FRANKLIN.

DEAR SON,

London, January 5, 1774.

No insinuations of the kind you mention, concerning Mr. G——y have reached me, and if they had, it would have been without the least effect, as I have always had the strongest reliance on the steadiness of his friendship, and on the best grounds, the knowledge I have of his integrity, and the often repeated disinterested services he has rendered me. My return will interfere with nobody's interest or influence in public affairs, as my intention is to decline all interest in them, and every active part, except where it can serve a friend, and to content myself with communicating the knowledge of them my situation may have furnished me with, and be content with giving my advice for the public benefit, where it may be asked, or where I shall think it may be attended to: for being now about entering my sixty-ninth year, and having lived so great a part of my life to the public, it seems but fair that I should be allowed to live the small remainder to myself and to my friends.

If the honorable office you mention will be agreeable to him, I heartily wish it him. I only hope that, if offered to him, he will insist on its being not during pleasure, but *quamdiu se bene gesserit*.

Our friend Temple, as you will see by the papers, has been engaged in a duel about an affair in which he had no concern. As the combat was interrupted, and understood to be unfinished, I thought it incumbent on me to do what I could for preventing farther mischief, and so declared my having transmitted the letters in question. This has drawn some censure upon myself; but as I grow old, I grow less con-

cerned about censure when I am satisfied that I act rightly, and I have the pleasure of having exculpated a friend who lay undeservedly under an imputation much to his dishonor.

I am now seriously preparing for my departure to America. I purpose sending my luggage, books, instruments, &c. by All, or Falconer, and take my passage to New York in one of the spring or summer packets, partly for settling some business with the Post-office there, and partly that I may see you on my way to Philadelphia, and learn thereby more perfectly the state of affairs. Your affectionate father,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE PRINTER OF THE PUBLIC ADVERTISER.

SIR,

The enclosed paper was written just before Lord Hillsborough quitted the American department. An expectation then prevailing, from the good character of the noble lord who succeeded him, that the grievances of the colonies would, under his administration, be redressed, it was laid aside; but as not a single measure of his predecessor has since been even attempted to be changed, and on the contrary new ones have been continually added further to exasperate, render them desperate, and drive them, if possible, into open rebellion, it may not be amiss now to give it the public, as it shows in detail the rise and progress of those differences which are about to break the empire in pieces.

I am, sir, yours, &c.

A. P.

SIR,

It is a bad temper of mind that takes a delight in opposition, and is ever ready to censure ministry

in the gross, without discrimination. Charity should be willing to believe that we never had an administration so bad, but there might be some good and some wise men in it; and that even such is our case at present. The Scripture saith, By their works shall ye know them. By their conduct, then, in their respective departments, and not by their company or their party connexions should they be distinctly and separately judged.

One of the most-serious affairs to this nation, that has of late required the attention of government, is our misunderstanding with the colonies. They are in the department of Lord Hillsborough, and from a prevailing opinion of his abilities, have been left by the other ministers very much to his management. If then our American business has been conducted with prudence, to him chiefly will be due the reputation of it.

Soon after the late war, it became an object with the ministers of this country to draw a revenue from America. The first attempt was by a stamp act. It soon appeared that this step had not been well considered; that the rights, the ability, the opinions and temper of that great people had not been sufficiently attended to. They complained that the tax was *unnecessary*, because their assemblies had ever been ready to make voluntary grants to the crown in proportion to their abilities, when duly required so to do; and *unjust*, because they had no representative in the British Parliament, but had parliaments of their own, wherein their consent was *given* as it *ought to be*, in *grants* of their own money. I do not mean to enter into this question. The parliament repealed the acts as inexpedient, but in another act asserted

a right of taxing America ; and in the following year laid duties on the manufactures of this country exported thither. On the repeal of the stamp act, the Americans had returned to their wonted good humor and commerce with Britain ; but this new act for laying duties renewed their uneasiness. They were long since forbidden by the navigation act to purchase manufactures from Britain, or make the same themselves.

In this situation were affairs when my Lord H. entered on the American administration. Much was expected from his supposed abilities, application, and knowledge of business in that department. The newspapers were filled with his panegyrics, and expectations raised perhaps inconveniently.

The Americans determined to petition their sovereign, praying his gracious interposition in their favor with his parliament, that the imposition of these duties, which they considered as an infringement of their rights, might be repealed. The assembly of the Massachusetts Bay had voted that it should be proposed to the other colonies to concur in that measure. This, for what reason I do not easily conceive, gave great offence to his lordship ; and one of his first steps was to *prevent* these concurring petitions. To this end, he sent a mandate to that assembly (the parliament of that country) requiring them to RESCIND that vote, and desist from the measure, threatening them with dissolution in case of disobedience. The governor communicated to them the instructions he received to that purpose. They refused to obey, and were dissolved ! Similar orders were sent at the same time to the governors of the other colonies, to dissolve their respective parlia-

ments if they presumed to accede to the Boston proposition of petitioning his majesty, and several of them were accordingly dissolved.

Bad ministers have ever been averse to the right subjects claim of petitioning and remonstrating to their sovereign : for through that channel the prince may be apprised of the mal-administration of his servants ; they may sometimes be thereby brought into danger ; at least such petitions afford a handle to their adversaries whereby to give them trouble. But as the measure to be complained of was not his lordship's, it is rather extraordinary that he should thus set his face against the intended complaints. In his angry letters to America, he called the proposal of these petitions " a measure of most *dangerous* and *factionous* tendency, calculated to inflame the minds of his majesty's subjects in the colonies, to promote an *unwarrantable combination*, and to excite and encourage an *open opposition* to, and denial of the *authority of the parliament*, and, to *subvert the true spirit of the constitution* ;" and directed the governors, immediately on the receipt of these orders, to exert their utmost influence to defeat this FLAGITIOUS attempt.

Without entering into the particular motives to this piece of his lordship's conduct, let us consider a little the wisdom of it. When subjects conceive themselves oppressed or injured, laying their complaints before the sovereign or the governing powers, is a kind of vent to griefs that gives some ease to their minds ; the receiving with at least an *appearance* of regard their petitions, and taking them into consideration, gives present hope, and affords time for the cooling of resentment ; so that even the refusal, when decently expressed and accompanied with reasons, is made less

unpleasant by the manner, is half approved, and the rest submitted to with patience. But when this vent to popular discontents is denied, and the subjects are thereby driven to desperation, infinite mischiefs follow. Many princes have lost part, and some the whole of their dominions, and some their lives, by this very conduct of their servants. The secretary for America, therefore, seems in this instance not to have judged rightly for the service of his excellent master.

But supposing the measure of discouraging and *preventing* petitions a right one, were the means of effecting this end judiciously chosen? I mean, the threatening with *dissolution* and the actual dissolving of the American parliaments? His lordship probably took up the idea from what he knows of the state of things in England and Ireland, where, to be re-chosen upon a dissolution, often gives a candidate great trouble, and sometimes costs him a great deal of money. A dissolution may therefore be both fine and punishment to the members, if they desire to be again returned. But in most of the colonies there is no such thing as standing candidate for election. There is neither treating nor bribing. No man even expresses the least inclination to be chosen. Instead of humble advertisements intreating votes and interest, you see, before every new election, requests of former members, acknowledging the honor done them by preceding elections, but setting forth their long service and attendance on the public business in that station, and praying that in consideration thereof, some other person may be chosen in their room. Where this is the case, where the same representatives may be and generally are, after a dissolution, chosen, without asking a vote or giving

even a glass of cyder to an elector, is it likely that such a threat could contribute in the least to answer the end proposed? The experience of former governors might have instructed his lordship that this was a vain expedient. Several of them, misled by their English ideas, had tried this practice to make assemblies submissive to their measures, but never with success. By the influence of his power in granting offices, a governor naturally has a number of friends in an assembly; these, if suffered to continue, though a minority, might frequently serve his purposes, by promoting what he wishes, or obstructing what he dislikes. But if, to punish the majority, he in a pet dissolves the house, and orders a new election, he is sure not to see a single friend in the new assembly. The people are put into an ill-humor by the trouble given them, they resent the dissolution as an affront, and leave out every man suspected of having the least regard for the governor. This was the very effect of my lord's dissolutions in America, and the new assemblies were all found more untractable than the old ones.

But besides the imprudence of this measure, was it constitutional? The crown has doubtless the prerogative of dissolving parliaments, a prerogative lodged in its hands for the public good, which may in various instances require the use of it. But should a king of Great Britain demand of his parliament the rescission of any vote they had passed, or forbid them to petition the throne, *on pain of dissolution*, and actually dissolve them accordingly, I humbly conceive the minister who advised it would run some hazard of censure at least, for thus using the prerogative to the violation of *common right*, and breach of the con-

stitution. The American assembly have no means of impeaching such a minister ; but there is an assembly, the parliament of England, that have that power, and in a former instance exercised it well, by impeaching a great man (Lord Clarendon) for having (though in one instance only) *endeavored to introduce arbitrary government into the colonies.*

The effect this operation of the American secretary had in America, was not a prevention of those petitions, as he intended, but a despair in the people of any success from them, since they could not pass to the throne but through the hands of one who showed himself so extremely averse to the existence of them. Thence arose the design of interesting the British merchants and manufacturers in the event of their petitions, by agreements not to import goods from Great Britain till their grievances were redressed. Universal resentment occasioned these agreements to be more generally entered into, and the sending troops to Boston, who daily insulted the assembly\* and townsmen, instead of terrifying into a compliance with his measures, served only to exasperate and sour the minds of people throughout the continent, make frugality fashionable when the consumption of British goods was the question, and determine the inhabitants to exert every nerve in establishing manufactures among themselves.

Boston having grievously offended his lordship, by the refractory spirit they had shown in re-choosing those representatives, whom he esteemed the leaders

\* They mounted a numerous guard daily round the parliament house, with drums beating and fifes playing while the members were in their debates, and had cannon planted and pointed at the building.



of the opposition there, he resolved to punish that town by removing the assembly from thence to Cambridge, a country place about four miles distant. Here too his lordship's English and Irish ideas seem to have misled him. Removing a parliament from London to Dublin, where so many of the inhabitants are supported by the expense of such a number of wealthy lords and commoners, and have a dependence on that support, may be a considerable prejudice to a city deprived of such advantage; but the removal of the assembly, consisting of frugal honest farmers, from Boston, could only affect the interest of a few poor widows, who keep lodging-houses there. Whatever manufactures the members might want were still purchased at Boston. They themselves indeed suffered some inconvenience, in being perhaps less commodiously lodged, and being at a distance from the records; but this and the keeping them before so long prorogued, when the public affairs required their meeting, could never reconcile them to ministerial measures, it could serve only to put them more out of humor with Britain and its government, so wantonly exercised, and to so little purpose. Ignorance alone of the true state of that country can excuse (if it may be excused) these frivolous proceedings.

To have *good ends* in view, and to use *proper means* to obtain them, shows the minister to be both *good* and *wise*. To pursue *good ends* by *improper means*, argues him, though *good*, to be but *weak*. To pursue *bad ends* by *artful means*, shows him to be *wicked* though *able*. But when his *ends* are *bad*, and the means he uses *improper* to obtain these ends, what shall we say of such a minister? Every step taken

for some time past in our treatment of America, the suspending their legislative powers, for not making laws *by direction* hence ; the countenancing their adversaries by rewards and pensions, paid out of the revenues extorted from them by laws to which they have not given their assent ; the sending over a set of rash indiscreet commissioners to collect that revenue, who, by insolence of behavior, harassing commerce, and perpetually accusing the good people (out of whose substance they are supported) to government here, as rebels and traitors, have made themselves universally odious there, but here are caressed and encouraged ; together with the arbitrary dissolution of assemblies, and the quartering troops among the people, to menace and insult them ; all these steps, if intended to provoke them to rebellion, that we might take their lives and confiscate their estates, are proper means to obtain a bad end : but if they are intended to conciliate the Americans to our government, restore our commerce with them, and secure the friendship and assistance which their growing strength, wealth, and power may in a few years render extremely valuable to us, can any thing be conceived more injudicious, more absurd ? His lordship may have in general a good understanding ; his friends say he has ; but in the political part of it there must surely be some *twist*, some extreme *obliquity*.

*A wellwisher to the king and all his dominions.*

TO THE PRINTER OF THE PUBLIC ADVERTISER.

SIR,

Your correspondent Britannicus inveighs violently against Dr. Franklin, for his ingratitude to the

ministry of this nation, who have conferred upon him so many favors. They gave him the post-office of America; they made his son a governor; and they offered him a post of five hundred a-year in the salt-office, if he would relinquish the interests of his country; but he has had the wickedness to continue true to it, and is as much an American as ever. As it is a settled point in government here, that every man has his price, it is plain they are bunglers in their business, and have not given him enough. Their master has as much reason to be angry with them, as Rodrigue in the play, with his apothecary, for not effectually poisoning Pandolpho, and they must probably make use of the apothecary's justification, viz.

SCENE IV.—RODRIGUE and FELL, the Apothecary.

*Rodrigue.* You promised to have this Pandolpho upon his bier in less than a week; 'tis more than a month since, and he still walks and stares me in the face.

*Fell.* True; and yet I have done my best endeavors. In various ways I have given the miscreant as much poison as would have killed an elephant. He has swallowed dose after dose;—far from hurting him, he seems the better for it. He hath a wonderfully strong constitution. I find I cannot kill him but by cutting his throat, and that, as I take it, is not my business.

*Rodrigue.* Then it must be mine.

TO THE PRINTER OF THE PUBLIC ADVERTISER.  
SIR,

Nothing can equal the present rage of our ministerial writers against our brethren in America, who

have the misfortune to be *whigs* in a reign when *whiggism* is out of fashion, who are besides protestant dissenters and lovers of liberty. One may easily see from what quarter comes the abuse of those people in the papers; their struggle for their rights is called REBELLION, and the people REBELS; while those who really rebelled in Scotland (1745) for the expulsion of the present reigning family, and the establishment of popery and arbitrary power on the ruins of liberty and protestantism, who entered England, and marched on as far as Derby, to the astonishment of this great city, and shaking the public credit of the nation, have now all their sins forgiven on account of their modish principles, and are called not *rebels*, but by the softer appellation of *insurgents*! These angry writers use their utmost efforts to persuade us that this war with the colonies (for a war it will be) is a national cause, when in fact it is merely a ministerial one. Administration wants an American revenue to dissipate in corruption. The quarrel is about a paltry three-penny duty on tea. There is no real clashing of interests between Britain and America. Their commerce is to their mutual advantage, or rather most to the advantage of Britain, which finds a vast market in America for its manufactures, and *as good pay*, I speak from knowledge, as in any country she trades to upon the face of the globe. But the fact needs not my testimony—it speaks for itself; for if we could elsewhere get better pay and better prices, we should not send our goods to America.

The gross calumniators of that people, who want us to imbrue our hands in brothers' blood, have the effrontery to tell the world that the Americans asso-

ciated in resolutions not to pay us what they owed us unless we repealed the stamp act. This is an INFAMOUS FALSEHOOD: they know it to be such. I call upon the incendiaries who have advanced it to produce their proofs. Let them name any two that entered into such an association, or any one that made such a declaration. Absurdity marks the very face of this lie. ' Every one acquainted with trade knows, that a credited merchant daring to be concerned in such an association could never expect to be trusted again. His character on the exchange of London would be ruined for ever. The great credit given them since that time, nay the present debt due from them is itself a proof of the confidence we have in their probity. Another villanous falsehood advanced against the Americans is, that though we have been at such expense in protecting them, they refuse to contribute their part to the public general expense of the empire. The fact is, that *they never did refuse a requisition of that kind*. A writer who calls himself *Sagittarius* (I suppose from his flinging about, like Solomon's fool, firebrands, *arrows*, and death) in the Ledger of March 9th, asserts that the "Experiment has been tried, and that they did not think it expedient to return even an answer." How does he prove this? Why, "the colony agents were told by Mr. Grenville, that a revenue *would be* required from them to defray the expenses of their protection." But was the requisition ever made? Were circular letters ever sent by his majesty's command from the secretary of state to the several colony governments, according to the established custom, stating the occasion, and requiring such supplies as were suitable

to their abilities and loyalty? And did they then refuse not only compliance but an answer? No such matter; agents are not the channel through which requisitions are made. If they were told by Mr. Grenville that "a revenue *would be* required, and yet the colonies made no offer, no grant, nor laid any tax," does it follow they would not have done it if they had been required? Probably they thought it time enough when the *requisition* should come; and in fact it never appeared there to this day. In the last war they all gave so liberally, that we thought ourselves bound in honor to return them a million. But we are disgusted with their free gifts; we want to have something that is obtained by force, like a mad landlord who should refuse the willing payment of his full rents, and choose to take less by way of robbery.

This shameless writer would cajole the people of England with the fancy of their being kings of America, and that their honor is at stake by the Americans disputing *their* government. He thrusts us into the throne cheek-by-jole with majesty, and would have us talk as he writes, of *our* subjects in America, and *our sovereignty* over America: forgetting that the Americans are subjects of the king, not *our* subjects, but our *fellow-subjects*; and that they have parliaments of their own, with the right of granting their own money by their own representatives, which we cannot deprive them of but by violence and injustice.

Having, by a series of iniquitous and irritating measures, provoked a loyal people almost to desperation, we now magnify every act of an American mob

into REBELLION, though the government there disapprove it and order prosecution, as is now the case with regard to the tea destroyed.—And we talk of nothing but troops and fleets, and force, of blocking up ports, destroying fisheries, abolishing charters, &c. &c. Here mobs of English sawyers can burn saw-mills; mobs of English laborers destroy or plunder magazines of corn; mobs of English coal-heavers attack houses with fire-arms; English smugglers can fight regularly the king's cruizing vessels, drive them ashore and burn them, as lately on the coast of Wales, and on the coast of Cornwall; but upon these accounts we hear no talk of England's being in *rebellion*; no threats of taking away its Magna Charta, or repealing its Bill of Rights: for we well know that the operations of a mob are often unexpected, sudden and soon over, so that the civil power can seldom prevent or suppress them, not being able to come in before they have dispersed themselves: and therefore it is not always accountable for their mischiefs.

Surely the great commerce of this nation with the Americans is of too much importance to be risked in a quarrel which has no foundation but ministerial pique and obstinacy!

To us in the way of trade comes now, and has long come, all the super-lucration arising from their labors. But will our reviling them as cheats, hypocrites, scoundrels, traitors, cowards, tyrants, &c. &c. according to the present court mode in all our papers, make them more our friends, more fond of our merchandise? Did ever any tradesman succeed who attempted to drub customers into his shop? And will honest JOHN BULL the farmer, be long satisfied

with servants that before his face attempt to kill his  
*plough horses?*

(Signed) A LONDONER.\*

TO DR. PRIESTLEY.

DEAR FRIEND,

Philadelphia, May 16, 1775.

You will have heard before this reaches you of a march stolen by the regulars into the country by night, and of their *expedition* back again. They retreated twenty miles in six hours.

The governor had called the assembly to propose Lord North's pacific plan, but, before the time of their meeting, began cutting of throats. You know it was said he carried the sword in one hand, and the olive branch in the other; and it seems he chose to give them a taste of the sword first.

He is doubling his fortifications at Boston, and hopes to secure his troops till succor arrives. The place indeed is naturally so defensible, that I think them in no danger.

All America is exasperated by his conduct, and more firmly united than ever. The breach between the two countries is grown wider, and in danger of becoming irreparable.

I had a passage of six weeks, the weather constantly so moderate that a London wherry might have accompanied us all the way. I got home in the evening, and the next morning was unanimously chosen, by the assembly of Pennsylvania, a delegate to the congress now sitting.

In coming over, I made a valuable philosophical

\* This and the preceding papers, addressed to the *Printer of the Public Advertiser*, were undoubtedly written by Dr. Franklin, about the time of his departure from England; though their precise dates have not been ascertained.



discovery,\* which I shall communicate to you when I can get a little time. At present am extremely hurried. Yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO DR. JOSEPH PRIESTLEY IN ENGLAND.

DEAR FRIEND,

Philadelphia, July 7, 1775.

The congress met at a time when all minds were so exasperated by the perfidy of General Gage and his attack on the country people, that propositions for attempting an accommodation were not much relished; and it has been with difficulty that we have carried another humble petition to the crown, to give Britain one more chance, one opportunity more of recovering the friendship of the colonies; which however I think she has not sense enough to embrace, and so I conclude she has lost them for ever.

She has begun to burn our sea-port towns; secure, I suppose, we shall never be able to return the outrage in kind. She may doubtless destroy them all; but if she wishes to recover our commerce, are these the probable means? She must certainly be distracted; for no tradesman out of Bedlam ever thought of increasing the number of his customers by knocking them on the head; or of enabling them to pay their debts by burning their houses.

If she wishes to have us subjects, and that we should submit to her as our compound sovereign, she is now giving us such miserable specimens of her

\* This is supposed to refer to Experiments made with the Thermometer on the Waters of the Ocean, in order to ascertain the being more or less in the Gulf Stream—or approaching the coast.—(See WRITINGS, Part. iv. *Papers on Philosophical Subjects.*)

government, that we shall ever detest and avoid it, as a complication of robbery, murder, famine, fire, and pestilence.

You will have heard, before this reaches you, of the treacherous conduct of General Gage to the remaining people in Boston, in detaining their goods, after stipulating to let them go out with their effects, on pretence that merchants' goods were not effects; the defeat of a great body of his troops by the country people at Lexington; some other small advantages gained in skirmishes with their troops; and the action at Bunker's Hill, in which they were twice repulsed, and the third time gained a dear victory. Enough has happened, one would think, to convince your ministers that the Americans will fight, and that this is a harder nut to crack than they imagined.

We have not yet applied to any foreign power for assistance, nor offered our commerce for their friendship. Perhaps we never may: yet it is natural to think of it, if we are pressed.

We have now an army on the establishment, which still holds yours besieged.

My time was never more fully employed. In the morning at six, I am at the committee of safety, appointed by the assembly to put the province in a state of defence; which committee holds till near nine, when I am at the congress, and that sits till after four in the afternoon. Both these bodies proceed with the greatest unanimity, and their meetings are well attended. It will scarce be credited in Britain, that men can be as diligent with us from zeal for the public good, as with you for thousands per annum. Such is the difference between uncorrupted new states, and corrupted old ones.

Great frugality and great industry are now become fashionable here : gentlemen, who used to entertain with two or three courses, pride themselves now in treating with simple beef and pudding. By these means, and the stoppage of our consumptive trade with Britain, we shall be better able to pay our voluntary taxes for the support of our troops. Our savings in the article of trade amount to near five million sterling per annum.

I shall communicate your letter to Mr. Winthrop; but the camp is at Cambridge, and he has as little leisure for philosophy as myself.

Believe me ever, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

TO DR. JOSEPH PRIESTLEY.

DEAR SIR,

Philadelphia, Oct. 3, 1775.

I am to set out to-morrow for the camp,\* and having but just heard of this opportunity, can only write a line to say that I am well and hearty. Tell our dear good friend, Dr. Price, who sometimes has his doubts and despondencies about our firmness, that America is determined and unanimous; a very few

\* Dr. Franklin, Colonel Harrison, and Mr. Lynch, were at this time appointed by congress (of which they were members) to confer on certain subjects with General Washington. The American army was then employed in blocking up General Howe in Boston; and it was during this visit that General Washington communicated the following memorable anecdote to Dr. Franklin; viz. "that there had been a time, when his army had been so destitute of military stores, as not to have powder enough in all its magazines to furnish more than *five* rounds per man for their small arms." Artillery were out of the question; they were fired now and then only to show that they had them. Yet this secret was kept with so much address and good countenance from both armies, that General Washington was enabled effectually to continue the blockade.

tories and placemen excepted, who will probably soon export themselves. Britain, at the expense of three millions, has killed one hundred and fifty Yankees this campaign; which is 20,000l. a-head; and at *Bunker's Hill* she gained a mile of ground, half of which she lost again by our taking post on *Ploughed Hill*. During the same time sixty thousand children have been born in America. From these *data* his mathematical head will easily calculate the time and expense necessary to kill us all, and conquer our whole territory. My sincere respects to \*\*, and to the club of honest whigs at \*\*. Adieu. I am ever yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO DAVID HARTLEY, ESQ.

DEAR SIR,

Philadelphia, Oct. 3, 1775.

I wish as ardently as you can do for peace, and should rejoice exceedingly in co-operating with you to that end. But every ship from Britain brings some intelligence of new measures that tend more and more to exasperate, and it seems to me that, until you have found by dear experience the reducing us by force impracticable, you will think of nothing fair and reasonable.

We have as yet resolved only on defensive measures. If you would recall your forces and stay at home, we should meditate nothing to injure you. A little time so given for cooling on both sides would have excellent effects. But you will goad and provoke us. You despise us too much—and you are insensible of the Italian adage, that there is no *little enemy*. I am persuaded that the body of the British people are our friends, but they are changeable, and by your lying gazettes may soon be made our ene-

mies. Our respect for them will proportionably diminish, and I see clearly we are on the high road to mutual family hatred and detestation. A separation of course will be inevitable. 'Tis a million of pities so fair a plan as we have hitherto been engaged in for increasing strength and empire with public felicity, should be destroyed by the mangling hands of a few blundering ministers. It will not be destroyed; God will protect and prosper it, you will only exclude yourselves from any share in it. We hear that more ships and troops are coming out. We know that you may do us a great deal of mischief, and are determined to bear it patiently as long as we can. But if you flatter yourselves with beating us into submission, you know neither the people nor the country. The congress is still sitting, and will wait the result of their *last* petition. Yours, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO M. DUMAS, IN HOLLAND.

DEAR SIR,

Philadelphia, Dec. 9, 1775.

I received your several favors of May 18, June 30, and July 8, by Messrs. Vaillant and Pochard; whom, if I could serve upon your recommendation, it would give me great pleasure. Their total want of English is at present an obstruction to their getting any employment among us; but I hope they will soon obtain some knowledge of it. This is a good country for artificers or farmers, but gentlemen of mere science in *les belles lettres* cannot so easily subsist here, there being little demand for their assistance among an industrious people, who, as yet, have not much leisure for studies of that kind.

I am much obliged by the kind present you have

made us of your edition of *Vattel*. It came to us in good season, when the circumstances of a rising state make it necessary frequently to consult the law of nations. Accordingly that copy which I kept (after depositing one in our own public library here, and sending the other to the college of Massachusetts Bay, as you directed) has been continually in the hands of the members of our congress, now sitting, who are much pleased with your notes and preface, and have entertained a high and just esteem for their author. Your manuscript "*Idée sur le gouvernement et la royauté*," is also well relished, and may in time have its effect. I thank you, likewise, for the other smaller pieces, which accompanied *Vattel*. "*Le court exposé de ce qui s'est passé entre la cour Br. et les colonies*," &c. being a very concise and clear statement of facts, will be reprinted here for the use of our new friends in Canada. The translations of the proceedings of our congress are very acceptable. I send you herewith what of them has been further published here, together with a few newspapers, containing accounts of some of the successes Providence has favored us with. We are threatened from England with a very powerful force, to come next year against us. We are making all the provision in our power here to oppose that force, and we hope we shall be able to defend ourselves. But, as the events of war are always uncertain, possibly, after another campaign, we may find it necessary to ask aid of some foreign power. It gives us great pleasure to learn from you, that *toute l'Europe nous souhaite le plus heureux succès pour le maintien de nos libertés*. But we wish to know, whether any one of them, from principles of humanity, is disposed magnani-

mously to step in for the relief of an oppressed people, or whether, if, as it seems likely to happen, we should be obliged to break off all connexion with Britain, and declare ourselves an independent people, there is any state or power in Europe who would be willing to enter into an alliance with us for the benefit of our commerce, which amounted, before the war, to near seven millions sterling per annum, and must continually increase, as our people increase most rapidly. Confiding, my dear friend, in your good-will to us and to our cause, and in your sagacity and abilities for business, the committee of congress, appointed for the purpose of establishing and conducting a correspondence with our friends in Europe, of which committee I have the honor to be a member, have directed me to request of you that, as you are situated at the Hague, where ambassadors from all the courts reside, you would make use of the opportunity that situation affords you, of discovering, if possible, the disposition of the several courts with respect to such assistance or alliance, if we should apply for the one, or propose the other. As it may possibly be necessary, in particular instances, that you should, for this purpose, confer directly with some great ministers, and show them this letter as your credential, we only recommend it to your discretion, that you proceed therein with such caution, as to keep the same from the knowledge of the English ambassador, and prevent any public appearance at present of your being employed in any such business, as thereby, we imagine, many inconveniences may be avoided, and your means of rendering us service increased.

That you may be better able to answer some ques-

tions, which will probably be put to you, concerning our present situation, we inform you—that the whole continent is very firmly united, the party for the measures of the British ministry being very small, and much dispersed—that we have had on foot, the last campaign, an army of near twenty-five thousand men, wherewith we have been able not only to block up the king's army in Boston, but to spare considerable detachments for the invasion of Canada, where we have met with great success, as the printed papers sent herewith will inform you, and have now reason to expect the whole province may be soon in our possession—that we purpose greatly to increase our force for the ensuing year; and thereby we hope, with the assistance of a well-disciplined militia, to be able to defend our coast, notwithstanding its great extent—that we have already a small squadron of armed vessels, to protect our coasting trade, who have had some success in taking several of the enemy's cruisers, and some of their transport vessels and store-ships. This little naval force we are about to augment, and expect it may be more considerable in the next summer.

We have hitherto applied to no foreign power. We are using the utmost industry in endeavoring to make saltpetre, and with daily increasing success. Our artificers are also every where busy in fabricating small arms, casting cannon, &c.; yet both arms and ammunition are much wanted. Any merchants who would venture to send ships laden with those articles might make great profit; such is the demand in every colony, and such generous prices are and will be given; of which, and of the manner of conducting such a voyage, the bearer, Mr. Storey,



can more fully inform you : and whoever brings in those articles is allowed to carry off the value in provisions to our West Indies, where they will probably fetch a very high price, the general exportation from North America being stopped. This you will see more particularly in a printed resolution of the congress.

We are in great want of good engineers, and wish you could engage and send us two able ones, in time for the next campaign, one acquainted with field service, sieges, &c. and the other with fortifying of sea-ports. They will, if well recommended, be made very welcome, and have honorable appointments, besides the expenses of their voyage hither, in which Mr. Storey can also advise them. As what we now request of you, besides taking up your time, may put you to some expense, we send you for the present, enclosed, a bill for one hundred pounds sterling to defray such expenses, and desire you to be assured that your services will be considered and honorably rewarded by the congress.

We desire, also, that you would take the trouble of receiving from Arthur Lee, esq., agent for the congress in England, such letters as may be sent by him to your care, and of forwarding them to us with your dispatches. When you have occasion to write to him to inform him of any thing, which it may be of importance that our friends there should be acquainted with, please to send your letters to him, under cover, directed to Mr. Alderman Lee, merchant, on Tower-hill, London ; and do not send it by post, but by some trusty shipper, or other prudent person, who will deliver it with his own hand. And when you send to us, if you have not a direct

safe opportunity, we recommend sending by way of St. Eustatia, to the care of Messrs. Robert and Cornelius Stevenson, merchants there, who will forward your dispatches to me. With sincere and great esteem and respect, I am, sir, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO JOHN HANCOCK, ESQ. PRÉSIDENT OF CONGRESS.

SIR,

Nantes, Dec. 8, 1776.

In thirty days after we left the capes of Delaware we came to an anchor in Quiberon Bay. I remained on board four days, expecting a change of wind proper to carry the ship into the river Loire; but the wind seeming fixed in an opposite quarter, I landed at Auray, and with difficulty got hither, the road not being well supplied with means of conveyance. Two days before we saw land we met a brigantine from Bordeaux belonging to Cork, and another from Rochefort belonging to Hull, both of which were taken. The first has on board staves, tar, turpentine, and claret: the other, Coniac brandy and flax-seed. There is some difficulty in determining what to do with them, as they are scarce worth sending to America, and the mind of the French court with regard to prizes brought into their ports is not yet known. It is certainly contrary to their treaties with Britain to permit the sale of them, and we have no regular means of trying and condemning them. There are, however, many here who would purchase prizes, we having already had several offers from persons who are willing to take upon themselves all consequences as to the illegality.

Captain Wickes, as soon as he can get his refreshments, intends a cruise in the channel. Our friends

in France have been a good deal dejected with the gazette accounts of advantages obtained against us by the British troops. I have helped them here to recover their spirits a little, by assuring them that we still face the enemy, and were under no apprehensions of their two armies being able to complete their junction.

I understand Mr. Lee has lately been at Paris, that Mr. Deane is still there, and that an underhand supply is obtained from the government, of two hundred brass field pieces, thirty thousand firelocks, and some other military stores, which are now shipping for America, and will be convoyed by a ship of war.

The court of England, Mr. Penet tells me (from whom I have the above intelligence), had the folly to demand Mr. Deane to be delivered up, but were refused.

Our voyage though not long was rough, and I feel myself weakened by it; but I now recover strength daily, and in a few days shall be able to undertake the journey to Paris. I have not yet taken any public character, thinking it prudent first to know whether the court is ready and willing to receive ministers publicly from the congress: that we may neither embarrass her on the one hand, nor subject ourselves to the hazard of a disgraceful refusal on the other, I have dispatched an express to Mr. Deane, with the letters I had for him from the committee and a copy of our commission, that he may immediately make the proper inquiries, and give me information. In the mean time, I find it is generally supposed here, that I am sent to negotiate, and that opinion appears to give great pleasure, if I can judge by the extreme civilities I meet with from numbers

of the principal people who have done me the honor to visit me. I have desired Mr. Deane, by some speedy and safe means, to give Mr. Lee notice of his appointment. I find several vessels here laden with military stores for America, just ready to sail; on the whole there is the greatest prospect that we shall be well provided for another campaign, and much stronger than we were the last. A Spanish fleet has sailed, with seven thousand land forces, foot, and some horse, their destination not known, but supposed against the Portuguese in Brazil. Both France and England are preparing strong fleets, and it is said that all the powers of Europe are preparing for war, apprehending a general one cannot be very distant. When I arrive at Paris, I shall be able to write with more certainty. I beg you to present my duty to the congress, and assure them of my most faithful endeavors in their service. With the sincerest esteem and respect, I have the honor to be, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO THE SECRET COMMITTEE OF CONGRESS.

GENTLEMEN,

Nantes, Dec. 8, 1776.

After a short but rough passage of thirty days, we anchored in Quiberon Bay, the wind not suiting to enter the Loire. Captain Wickes did every thing in his power to make the voyage comfortable to me; and I was much pleased with what I saw of his conduct as an officer, when on supposed occasions we made preparation for engagement, the good order and readiness with which it was done, being far beyond my expectations, and I believe equal to any thing of the kind in the best ships of the king's fleet. He seems to have also a very good set of officers

under him : I hope they will all in good time be promoted. He met and took two prizes, brigantines, one belonging to Cork, laden with staves, pitch, tar, turpentine and claret; the other to Hull, with a cargo of flax-seed and brandy. The captains have made some propositions of ransom, which, perhaps, may be accepted, as there is yet no means of condemning them here, and they are scarce worth sending to America. The ship is yet in Quiberon Bay, with her prizes. I came hither seventy miles by land. I am made extremely welcome here, where America has many friends. As soon as I have recovered strength enough for the journey, which I hope will be in a very few days, I shall set out for Paris. My letter to the president will inform you of some other particulars. With great esteem, I have the honor to be, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. December 10th. I have just learnt that eighty pieces of cannon, all brass, with carriages, braces, and every thing fit for immediate service, were embarked in a frigate from Havre, which is sailed: the rest were to go in another frigate of thirty-six guns.

TO THE SAME.

GENTLEMEN,

Paris, Jan. 4, 1777.

I arrived here about two weeks since, where I found Mr. Deane. Mr. Lee has since joined us from London. We have had an audience of the minister, Count de Vergennes, and were respectfully received. We left for his consideration a sketch of the proposed treaty. We are to wait upon him to-morrow with a strong memorial, requesting the aids mentioned in

our instructions. By his advice we had an interview with the Spanish ambassador, Count d'Aranda, who seems well disposed towards us, and will forward copies of our memorials to his court, which will act, he says, in perfect concert with this. Their fleets are said to be in fine order, manned and fit for sea. The cry of this nation is for us, but the court, it is thought, views an approaching war with reluctance. The press continues in England. As soon as we can receive a positive answer from these courts we shall dispatch an express with it.

I am, gentlemen, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO DAVID HARTLEY, ESQ. M.P.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, near Paris, October 14, 1777.

Filled though our letters have always been with sentiments of good-will to both countries, and earnest desires of preventing their ruin and promoting their mutual felicity, I have been apprehensive that if it were known a correspondence subsisted between us, it might be attended with inconvenience to you. I have therefore been backward in writing, not caring to trust the post, and not well knowing who else to trust with my letters. But being now assured of a safe conveyance, I venture to write to you, especially as I think the subject such a one as you may receive a letter upon without censure.

Happy should I have been, if the honest warnings I gave of the fatal separation of interests as well as of affections, that must attend the measures commenced while I was in England, had been attended to, and the horrid mischief of this abominable war been thereby prevented. I should still be happy in any

successful endeavors for restoring peace, consistent with the liberties, the safety, and the honor of America. As to our submitting to the government of Great Britain, it is vain to think of it. She has given us by her numberless barbarities (by her malice in bribing slaves to murder their masters, and savages to massacre the families of farmers, with her baseness in rewarding the unfaithfulness of servants, and debauching the virtue of honest seamen intrusted with our property) in the prosecution of the war, and in the treatment of the prisoners, so deep an impression of her depravity, that we never again can trust her in the management of our affairs and interests. It is now impossible to persuade our people, as I long endeavored, that the war was merely ministerial, and that the nation bore still a good-will to us. The infinite number of addresses printed in your gazettes all approving the conduct of your government towards us, and encouraging our destruction by every possible means, the great majority in parliament constantly manifesting the same sentiments, and the popular public rejoicings on occasion of any news of the slaughter of an innocent and virtuous people fighting only in defence of their just rights; these, together with the recommendations of the same measures by even your celebrated moralists and divines in their writings and sermons, that are still approved and applauded in your great national assemblies—all join in convincing us that you are no longer the magnanimous enlightened nation we once esteemed you, and that you are unfit and unworthy to govern us, as not being able to govern your own passions.

But, as I have said, I should be nevertheless happy

in seeing peace restored. For though if my friends and the friends of liberty and virtue, who still remain in England, could be drawn out of it, a continuance of this war to the ruin of the rest would give me less concern, I cannot, as that removal is impossible, but wish for peace for their sakes, as well as for the sake of humanity and preventing further carnage.

This wish of mine, ineffective as it may be, induces me to mention to you that between nations long exasperated against each other in war, some act of generosity and kindness towards prisoners on one side, has softened resentment and abated animosity on the other, so as to bring on an accommodation. You in England, if you wish for peace, have at present the opportunity of trying this means with regard to the prisoners now in your gaols. They complain of very severe treatment: they are far from their friends and families, and winter is coming on, in which they must suffer extremely if continued in their present situation, fed scantily on bad provisions, without warm lodging, clothes, or fire; and not suffered to invite or receive visits from their friends, or even from the humane and charitable of their enemies. I can assure you from my own certain knowledge, that your people, prisoners in America, have been treated with great kindness: they have been served with the same rations of wholesome provisions with our own troops; comfortable lodgings have been provided for them, and they have been allowed large bounds of villages in the healthy air, to walk, and amuse themselves with on their parole. Where you have thought fit to employ contractors to supply your people, these contractors have been protected and aided in their operations. Some considerable



act of kindness towards our people would take off the reproach of inhumanity in that respect from the nation, and leave it where it ought with more certainty to lay, on the conductors of your war in America. This I hint to you, out of some remaining good-will to a nation I once loved sincerely. But as things are, and in my present temper of mind, not being over-fond of receiving obligations, I shall content myself with proposing that your government would allow us to send or employ a commissary to take some care of those unfortunate people. Perhaps on your representations this might be speedily obtained in England, though it was refused most inhumanly at New York.

If you could have leisure to visit the gaols in which they are confined, and should be desirous of knowing the truth relative to the treatment they receive, I wish you would take the trouble of distributing among the most necessitous, according to their wants, five or six hundred pounds, for which your drafts on me here shall be punctually honored. You could then be able to speak with some certainty to the point in parliament, and this might be attended with good effects.

If you cannot obtain for us permission to send a commissary, possibly you may find a trusty, humane, discreet person at Plymouth, and another at Portsmouth, who would undertake to communicate what relief we may be able to afford those unfortunate men, martyrs to the cause of liberty. Your king will not reward you for taking this trouble, but God will. I shall not mention the gratitude of America: you will have what is better, the applause of your own good conscience. Our captains have set at liberty

above two hundred of your people made prisoners by our armed vessels and brought into France, besides a great number dismissed at sea on your coasts, to whom vessels were given to carry them in. But you have not returned us a man in exchange! If we had sold your people to the Moors at Sallee, as you have many of ours to the African and East India companies, could you have complained?

In revising what I have written, I found too much warmth in it, and was about to strike out some parts. Yet I let them go, as they will afford you this one reflection: "If a man, naturally cool, and rendered still cooler by old age, is so warmed by our treatment of his country, how much must those people in general be exasperated against us! and why are we making inveterate enemies by our barbarity, not only of the present inhabitants of a great country, but of their infinitely more numerous posterity; who will in all future ages detest the name of *Englishman*, as much as the children in Holland now do those of *Alva* and *Spaniard*?" This will certainly happen unless your conduct is speedily changed, and the national resentment falls, where it ought to fall heavily, on your ministry, or perhaps rather on the —, whose will they only execute.

With the greatest esteem and affection, and best wishes for your prosperity, I have the honor to be,  
 dear sir, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO MR. HUTTON.\*

MY DEAR OLD FRIEND,

Passy, Feb. 1, 1778.

You desired that if I had no proposition to make, I would at least give my advice.

\* See an account of this gentleman, Part i. p. 115.

I think it is Ariosto who says, that all things lost on earth are to be found in the moon; on which somebody remarked, that there must be a great deal of good advice in the moon. If so, there is a good deal of mine formerly given and lost in this business. I will however at your request give a little more, but without the least expectation that it will be followed; for none but God can at the same time give good counsel and wisdom to make use of it.

You have lost by this mad war, and the barbarity with which it has been carried on, not only the government and commerce of America, and the public revenues and private wealth arising from that commerce; but what is more, you have lost the esteem, respect, friendship, and affection of all that great and growing people, who consider you at present, and whose posterity will consider you, as the worst and wickedest nation upon earth. A peace you may undoubtedly obtain by dropping all your pretensions to govern us: and by your superior skill in huckstering negotiation, you may possibly make such an apparently advantageous bargain as shall be applauded in your parliament; but you cannot with the peace recover the affections of that people; it will not be a lasting nor a profitable one, nor will it afford you any part of that strength which you once had by your union with them, and might (if you had been wise enough to take advice) have still retained.

To recover this respect and affection, you must tread back the steps you have taken.

Instead of honoring and rewarding the American advisers and promoters of this war, you should disgrace them; with all those who have inflamed the nation against America by their malicious writings;

and all the ministers and generals who have prosecuted the war with such inhumanity. This would show a national change of disposition, and a disapprobation of what had passed.

In proposing terms, you should not only grant such as the necessity of your affairs may evidently oblige you to grant, but such additional ones as may show your generosity, and thereby demonstrate your goodwill. For instance, perhaps you might by your treaty retain all Canada, Nova Scotia, and the Floridas. But if you would have a real friendly as well as able ally in America, and avoid all occasion of future discord which will otherwise be continually arising on your American frontiers, you should throw in those countries. And you may call it, if you please, an indemnification for the burning of their towns; which indemnification will otherwise be some time or other demanded.

I know your people will not see the utility of such measures, and will never follow them, and even call it insolence and impudence in me to mention them. I have, however, complied with your desire, and am, as ever, your affectionate friend, B. FRANKLIN.

*(Enclosing the foregoing.)*

TO MR. HUTTON.

DEAR OLD FRIEND,

Passy, Feb. 12, 1778.

I wrote the above some time before I received yours, acquainting me with your speedy and safe return, which gave me pleasure.\* I doubted after I had written it whether it would be well to send it; for as your proud nation despises us exceedingly,

\* Mr. Hutton had lately been in Paris.

and demands and expects absolute and humble submission, all talk of treaty must appear imprudence, and tend to provoke rather than conciliate. As you still press me by your last to say something, I conclude to send what I had written; for I think the advice is good, though it must be useless; and I cannot, as some amongst you desire, make propositions, having none committed to me to make; but we can treat if any are made to us; which however we do not expect. I abominate with you all murder, and I may add that the slaughter of men in an unjust cause is nothing less than murder; I therefore never think of your present ministers and their abettors, but with the image strongly painted in my view, of their hands red, wet, and dropping with the blood of my countrymen, friends, and relations. No peace can be signed by those hands. Peace and friendship will nevertheless subsist for ever between Mr. Hutton and his affectionate friend,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO D. HARTLEY, ESQ. M.P.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, Feb. 12, 1778.

A thousand thanks for your so readily engaging in the means of relieving our poor captives, and the pains you have taken, and the advances you have made for that purpose. I received your kind letter of the 3rd instant, and send you enclosed a bill of £100. I much approve of Mr. Wren's prudent, as well as benevolent conduct, in the disposition of the money, and wish him to continue doing what shall appear to him and you to be right, which I am persuaded will appear the same to me and my colleagues here. I beg you will present him, when you write, my respectful acknowledgments.

Your "earnest caution and request that nothing may ever persuade America to throw themselves into the arms of France; for that times may mend, and that an American must always be a stranger in France, but that Great Britain may for ages to come be their home," marks the goodness of your heart, your regard for us, and love of your country. But when your nation is hiring all the cut-throats it can collect of all countries and colors to destroy us, it is hard to persuade us not to ask or accept aid from any power that may be prevailed with to grant it; and this only from the hope that though you now thirst for our blood, and pursue us with fire and sword, you may in some future time treat us kindly. This is too much patience to be expected of us; indeed I think it is not in human nature. The Americans are received and treated here in France with a cordiality, a respect and affection they never experienced in England when they most deserved it; and which is now (after all the pains taken to exasperate the English against them, and render them odious as well as contemptible) less to be expected there than ever. And I cannot see why we may not, upon an alliance, hope for a continuance of it; at least of as much as the Swiss enjoy, with whom France has maintained a faithful friendship for two hundred years past, and whose people appear to live here in as much esteem as the natives. America has been *forced and driven* into the arms of France.\* She was a dutiful and virtuous daughter. A cruel mother-in-law turned her out of doors, defamed her, and sought

\* The treaty of commerce and that of eventual alliance with France had both been signed six days prior to the date of this letter, though the fact was then kept secret.

her life. All the world knows her innocence and takes her part; and her friends hope soon to see her honorably married. They can never persuade her return and submission to so barbarous an enemy. In her future prosperity, if she forgets and forgives, it is all that can be reasonably expected of her. I believe she will make as good and useful a wife as she did a daughter, that her husband will love and honor her, and that the family from which she was so wickedly expelled will long regret the loss of her.

I know not whether a peace with us is desired in England. I rather think it is not at present, unless on the old impossible terms of submission and receiving pardon. Whenever you shall be disposed to make peace upon equal and reasonable terms, you will find little difficulty if you get first an honest ministry. The present have all along acted so deceitfully and treacherously, as well as inhumanly, towards the Americans, that I imagine the absolute want of all confidence in them will make a treaty at present between them and the congress impracticable.

The subscription for the prisoners will have excellent effects in favor of England and Englishmen. The Scotch subscriptions for raising troops to destroy us, though amounting to much greater sums, will not do their nation half so much good. If you have an opportunity, I wish you would express our respectful acknowledgments and thanks to your committee and contributors, whose benefactions will make our poor people as comfortable as their situation can permit. Adieu, my dear friend. Accept my thanks for the excellent papers you enclosed to me. Your endeavors for peace, though unsuccessful, will always be a comfort to you; and in

time, when this mad war shall be universally execrated, will be a solid addition to your reputation. I am ever, with the highest esteem, &c.

P. S. An old friend of mine, Mr. Hutton, a chief of the Moravians, who is often at the queen's palace, and is sometimes spoken to by the king, was over here lately. He pretended to no commission, but urged me much to propose some terms of peace, which I avoided. He has written to me since his return, pressing the same thing, and expressing with some confidence his opinion that we might have every thing short of absolute independence, &c. Enclosed I send my answers, open, that you may read them, and if you please copy, before you deliver or forward them.\* They will serve to show you more fully my sentiments, though they serve no other purpose.

TO D. HARTLEY, ESQ. M.P.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, Feb. 26, 1778.

I received yours of the 18th and 20th of this month, with Lord North's proposed bills. The more I see of the ideas and projects of your ministry, and their little arts and schemes of amusing and dividing us, the more I admire the prudent, manly, and magnanimous propositions contained in your intended motion for an address to the king. What reliance can we have on an act expressing itself to be only a declaration of the *intention* of parliament concerning the *exercise* of the RIGHT of imposing taxes in America, when in the bill itself, as well as in the

\* See the two preceding letters.



title, a right is supposed and claimed which never existed; and a *present intention* only is declared not to use it, which may be changed by another act next session, with a preamble that this *intention* being found inexpedient, it is thought proper to repeal this act and resume the exercise of *the right* in its full extent? If any solid permanent benefit was intended by this, why is it confined to the colonies of North America, and not extended to the loyal ones in the sugar islands? But it is now needless to criticise, as all acts that suppose your future government of the colonies can be no longer significant.

In the act for appointing commissioners, instead of full powers to agree upon terms of peace and friendship, with a promise of ratifying such treaty as they shall make in pursuance of those powers, it is declared, that their agreements shall have no force nor effect, nor be carried into execution till approved of by parliament; so that every thing of importance will be uncertain. But they are allowed to proclaim a cessation of arms, and revoke their proclamation as soon as in consequence of it our militia have been allowed to go home: they may suspend the operation of acts prohibiting trade, and take off that suspension when our merchants in consequence of it have been induced to send their ships to sea; in short, they may do every thing that can have a tendency to divide and distract us, but nothing that can afford us security. Indeed, sir, your ministers do not know us. We may not be quite so cunning as they, but we have really more sense, as well as more courage than they have ever been willing to give us credit for; and I am persuaded these acts will

rather obstruct peace than promote it, and that they will not answer in America the mischievous and malevolent ends for which they were intended. In England they may indeed amuse the public creditors, give hopes and expectations that shall be of some present use, and continue the mismanagers a little longer in their places, *Voilà tout !*

In return for your repeated advice to us not to conclude any treaty with the house of Bourbon, permit me to give (through you) a little advice to the Whigs in England. Let nothing induce them to join with the Tories in supporting and continuing this wicked war against the Whigs of America, whose assistance they may hereafter want to secure their own liberties; or whose country they may be glad to retire to for the enjoyment of them.

If peace by a treaty with America upon equal terms were really desired, your commissioners need not go there for it, supposing, as by the bill they are empowered "to treat with such person or persons as in their wisdom and discretion they shall think meet," they should happen to conceive that the commissioners of the congress at Paris might be included in that description. I am ever, dear sir, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

P.S.' Seriously, on farther thoughts, I am of opinion, that if wise and honest men, such as Sir George Saville, the bishop of St. Asaph,\* and yourself, were to come over here immediately with powers to treat, you might not only obtain peace with America, but prevent a war with France.

\* Dr. Shipley.

TO MR. HUTTON.

Passy, March 24, 1778.

My dear old friend was in the right not "to call in question the sincerity of my words where I say, February 12, *we can treat if any propositions are made to us.*" They were true then, and are so still, if Britain has not declared war with France; for in that case we shall undoubtedly think ourselves obliged to continue the war as long as she does. But methinks you should have taken us at our word, and have sent immediately your propositions in order to prevent such a war, if you did not choose it. Still I conceive it would be well to do it, if you have not already rashly begun the war. Assure yourself nobody more sincerely wishes perpetual peace among men than I do; but there is a prior wish, that they would be equitable and just, otherwise such peace is not possible; and indeed wicked men have no right to expect it. Adieu! I am ever yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

Note from WILLIAM PULTENEY, Esq. M.P. (under the assumed name of *Williams.*)

Mr. Williams returned this morning to Paris, and will be glad to see Dr. Franklin, whenever it is convenient for the doctor, at the *Hotel Frasiliere, Rue Tournon*. It is near the hotel where he lodged when the doctor saw him a fortnight ago. He does not propose to go abroad, and therefore the doctor will find him at any hour. He understands that Mr. Alexander is not yet returned from Dijon, which he regrets.

Sunday morning, March 29, 1778.

*[The following letter to Mr. Pulteney, was not sent, but contains what was said in a conversation Dr. Franklin had with him in Paris.]*

TO WILLIAM PULTENEY, ESQ. M.P.

SIR,

Passy, March 30, 1778.

When I first had the honor of conversing with you on the subject of peace, I mentioned it as my opinion that every proposition which implied our voluntarily agreeing to return to a dependence on Britain was now become impossible; that a peace on equal terms undoubtedly might be made; and that though we had no particular powers to treat of peace with England, we had general powers to make treaties of peace, amity, and commerce, with any state in Europe, by which I thought we might be authorised to treat with Britain; who, if sincerely disposed to peace, might save time and much bloodshed by treating with us directly.

I also gave it as my opinion, that in the treaty to be made, Britain should endeavor, by the fairness and generosity of the terms she offered, to recover the esteem, confidence, and affection of America, without which the peace could not be so beneficial, as it was not likely to be lasting. In this I had the pleasure to find you of my opinion.

But I see by the propositions you have communicated to me, that the ministers cannot yet divest themselves of the idea, that the power of parliament over us is constitutionally absolute and unlimited; and that the limitations they may be willing now to put to it by treaty, are so many favors, or so many benefits for which we are to make compensation.

As our opinions in America are totally different, a treaty on the terms proposed, appears to me utterly

impracticable either here or there. Here we certainly cannot make it, having not the smallest authority to make even the declaration specified in the proposed letter, without which, if I understood you right, treating with us cannot be commenced.

I sincerely wish as much for peace as you do, and I have enough remaining of good-will for England to wish it for her sake as well as for our own, and for the sake of humanity. In the present state of things, the proper means of obtaining it, in my opinion, are to acknowledge the independence of the United States, and then enter at once into a treaty with us for a suspension of arms, with the usual provisions relating to distances; and another for establishing peace, friendship, and commerce, such as France has made. This might prevent a war between you and that kingdom, which in the present circumstances and temper of the two nations an accident may bring on every day, though contrary to the interest and without the previous intention of either. Such a treaty we might probably now make with the approbation of our friends: but if you go to war with them on account of their friendship for us, we are bound by ties, stronger than can be formed by any treaty, to fight against you with them, as long as the war against them shall continue.

May God at last grant that wisdom to your national councils, which he seems long to have denied them, and which only sincere, just, and humane intentions can merit or expect! With great personal esteem, I have the honor to be, sir, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

WM. ALEXANDER, ESQ. TO DR. FRANKLIN.

MY DEAR SIR,

Upon a night's reflection, it is thought right that you be possessed of the enclosed,\* to be afterwards returned without taking copy, in case no business be done. Will you let me know by the bearer if we are to see you in town to-day, and when, that I may be at hand?

Saturday morning, April 4, 1778.

TO DR. BANCROFT,† F.R.S. LONDON.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, April 16, 1778.

I wish you would assure our friend that Dr. Franklin never gave any such expectations to Mr. Pultney. On the contrary, he told him that the commissioners could not succeed in their mission, whether they went to recover the *dependence* or to *divide*. His opinion is confirmed by the enclosed resolves, which perhaps it may not be amiss to publish in England. Please to send me the newspaper. Yours affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY JOSEPH REED, ESQ. PRESIDENT  
OF THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA.

SIR,

Passy, March 19, 1780.‡

I have just received the pamphlet you did me the honor to send me by M. Gérard, and have read

\* Some proposals on the part of the British ministry, eventually disapproved of by Dr. Franklin, and returned.

† An American gentleman of great worth and abilities; an intimate and much respected friend of Dr. Franklin's, to whom the United States are greatly indebted for his exertion and assistance in the cause of their independence.

‡ This letter is inserted here (out of its place), as elucidating the foregoing one.

it with pleasure: not only as the clear state of facts, it does you honor, but as it proves the falsehood of a man,\* who also showed no regard to truth in what he said of me, "*that I approved of the propositions he carried over.*" The truth is this; his brother, Mr. Pultney, came here with those propositions; and after stipulating that if I did not approve of them, I should not speak of them to any person, he communicated them to me. I told him frankly, on his desiring to know my sentiments, that I DID NOT *approve of them, and that I was sure they would not be accepted in America.* But I said, 'There are two other commissioners here. I will, if you please, show your propositions to them, and you will hear their opinions. I will also show them to the ministry here, without whose knowledge and concurrence we can take no step in such affairs.' 'No,' said he; 'as you do not approve of them, it can answer no purpose to show them to any body else: the reasons that weigh with you will also weigh with them: therefore, I now pray that no mention may be made of my having been here, or my business.' To this I agreed, and therefore nothing could be more astonishing to me, than to see in an American newspaper, that direct lie, in a letter from Mr. Johnstone, joined with two other falsehoods, relating to the time of the treaty, and to the opinion of Spain!

In proof of the above, I enclose a certificate of a friend of Mr. Pultney's, the only person present at our interview; and I do it the rather at this time, because I am informed that another calumniator (the same who formerly in his private letters to par-

\* Sir James Johnstone, one of the British commissioners sent to America.

ticular members, accused you, with Messrs. Jay, Duane, Langdon, and Harrison, of betraying the secrets of congress in a correspondence with the ministry) has made this transaction with Mr. Pultney an article of accusation against me, as having approved the same propositions. He proposes, I understand, to settle in your government. I caution you to beware of him ; for in sowing suspicions and jealousies, in creating misunderstandings and quarrels among friends, in malice, subtilty, and indefatigable industry, he has, I think, no equal.\*

I am glad to see that you continue to preside in our new state, as it shows that your public conduct is approved by the people. You have had a difficult time, which required abundance of prudence ; and you have been equal to the occasion. The disputes about the constitution seem to have subsided. It is much admired here and all over Europe, and will draw over many families of fortune to settle under it, as soon as there is a peace. The defects that may on seven years' trial be found in it, can be amended, when the time comes for considering them. With great and sincere esteem and respect, I have the honor to be, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

*(Enclosed in the foregoing.)*

I do hereby certify whom it may concern, that I was with Mr. Pultney and Dr. Franklin at Paris, when in a conversation between them on the subject of certain propositions for a reconciliation with America, offered by Mr. Pultney, Dr. Franklin said *he did not approve of them*, nor did he think they would

\* Supposed to allude to Dr. Arthur Lee, of Virginia.



be approved in America, but that he would communicate them to his colleagues and the French ministry. This Mr. Pultney opposed, saying, that it would answer no good end, as he was persuaded that what weighed with Dr. Franklin would weigh also with them; and therefore desired that no mention might be made of his having offered such propositions, or even of his having been here on such business; but that the whole might be buried in oblivion, agreeable to what had been stipulated by Mr. Pultney, and agreed to by Dr. Franklin, before the propositions were produced, which Dr. Franklin accordingly promised. (Signed) WILLIAM ALEXANDER.

Paris, March 19, 1780.

TO DR. FRANKLIN, PASSY.

DEAR SIR,

I send you adjoined the certificate you desire; and am perfectly convinced from conversations I have since had with Mr. Pultney, that nobody was authorized to hold the language which has been imputed to him on that subject; and as I have a high opinion of his candor and worth, I know it must be painful to him to be brought into question in matters of fact with persons he esteems. I could wish that this matter may receive no farther publicity than what is necessary for your justification. I am, &c.

W. ALEXANDER.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES, MINISTER FOR FOREIGN  
AFFAIRS, VERSAILLES.

SIR,

Passy, April 24, 1778.

Mr. Hartley, member of parliament, an old acquaintance of mine, arrived here from London on

Sunday last. He is generally in the opposition, especially on American questions, but has some respect for Lord North. In conversation he expressed the strongest anxiety for peace with America, and appeared extremely desirous to know my sentiments of the terms which might probably be acceptable if offered; whether America would not, to obtain peace, grant some superior advantages in trade to Britain, and enter into an alliance offensive and defensive; whether, if war should be declared against France, we had obliged ourselves by treaty to join with her against England. My answers have been, That the United States were not fond of war, and with the advice of their friends would probably be easily prevailed with to make peace on equitable terms; but we had no terms committed to us to propose, and I did not choose to mention any. That Britain, having injured us heavily by making this unjust war upon us, might think herself well off, if on *reparations of those injuries* we admitted her to *equal* advantages with other nations in commerce; but certainly she had no reason to expect *superior*. That her known fondness for war, and the many instances of her readiness to engage in wars on frivolous occasions, were probably sufficient to cause an immediate rejection of every proposition for an *offensive* alliance with her. And that if she made war against France on our account, a peace with us at the same time was impossible; for that, having met with friendship from that generous nation when we were cruelly oppressed by England, we were under ties stronger than treaties could form, to make common cause, which we should certainly do to the utmost of our power. Here has also been with me a Mr. Chap-

man, who says he is a member of parliament of Ireland, on his way home from Nice, where he had been for the recovery of his health. He pretended to call on me only from motives of respect for my character, &c. But after a few compliments he entered on a similar discourse, urging much to know what terms would satisfy America, and whether on having *peace and independence granted* to us, we should not be willing to submit to the navigation act, or give equivalent privileges in trade to Britain. The purport of my answer to him was, in short, that *peace* was of *equal* value to England as to us, and *independence* we were already in possession of: that therefore England's offer to grant them to us, could not be considered as proposing any favor, or as giving her a right to expect peculiar advantages in commerce. By his importunity I found his visit was not so occasional as he represented it: and from some expressions I conjectured he might be sent by Lord Shelburne, to sound me, and collect some information. On the whole, I gather from these conversations, that the opposition, as well as the ministry, are perplexed with the present situation of affairs, and know not which way to turn themselves, whether it is best to go backward or forward, or what steps to take to extricate that nation from its present dangerous situation.

I thought it right to give your excellency an account of these interviews, and to acquaint you with my intention of avoiding such hereafter, as I see but little prospect of utility in them, and think they are very liable to hurtful misrepresentations.

By advices from London we learn, that a fleet for Quebec, with goods valued at 500,000*l.* sterling, is

to sail about the end of this month under convoy only of a single frigate of thirty guns, in which is to go Governor Haldimand.

Enclosed I send a paper I have just received from London. It is not subscribed by any name, but I know the hand. It is from an old friend of general and great acquaintance, and marks strongly the present distress and despair of considerate people in England. I have the honor to be, with the greatest respect, your Excellency's, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

FROM COUNT DE VERGENNES TO DR. FRANKLIN,  
IN ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING.

A Versailles, Avril 25, 1778.

J'ai rendu compte au Roi, Monsieur, du contenu de la lettre que vous m'avez fait l'honneur de m'écrire hier, et Sa Majesté me charge de vous témoigner toute sa satisfaction de votre empressement à nous informer de l'objet de vos conférences avec M. Hartley. Le grand art de l'Angleterre fut toujours de chercher à diviser, c'est un bon moyen en effet pour s'assurer l'empire ; mais ce n'est ni auprès de vous ni auprès de vos collègues qu'il peut être employé avec succès ; je porte avec confiance le même jugement des Etats-Unis. Au reste, il n'est pas possible, Monsieur, de répondre avec plus de noblesse, de franchise et de fermeté que vous l'avez fait à M. Hartley : il n'a pas lieu d'être content de sa mission. J'ignore si ce membre du parlement en a une pour nous ; il désire de me voir, et je l'attends dans la matinée. Je ne serois pas surpris qu'il ne se proposât de semer la défiance entre nous, en introduisant une double négociation ; mais je saurai y obvier, et

vous serez instruit de ce qui se passera entre nous pour peu qu'il y ait quelque chose d'intéressant.

J'ai l'honneur d'être, avec une très parfaite considération, Monsieur, votre très humble et très obéissant serviteur,

DE VERGENNES.

D. HARTLEY, ESQ. M. P. TO DR. FRANKLIN.

DEAR SIR,

Paris, April 20, 1778.

I will take care of all your commissions. This moment a second packet of infinite value is received, which I shall cherish as a mark of affection from you. I opened the letter by mistake which came with it, and soon saw it was not for me. I hope you will excuse it. I choose rather to throw myself upon your goodness for the excuse, than any thing else. I shall not set out till between one and two; therefore if you will be so good as to send me another copy, I will take care of it and deliver it safely.

God bless you, my dear friend. No exertion or endeavor on my part shall be wanting, that we may some time or other meet again in peace. Your powers are infinitely more influential than mine. To those powers I trust my last hopes. I will conclude, blessed are the peace-makers!

Your affectionate friend,

D. HARTLEY.

If tempestuous times should come, take care of your own safety: events are uncertain, and men may be capricious. Yours, &c.

D. H.

#### ANSWER.

I thank you for your kind caution; but having nearly finished a long life, I set but little value on what remains of it. Like a draper, when one chaffers with him for a remnant, I am ready to say, "As it is

only the *fag-end*, I will not differ with you about it, take it for what you please." Perhaps the best use such an old fellow can be put to, is to make a martyr of him.

B. F.

ENDORSEMENT on the following anonymous Note :

*" An anonymous letter delivered to me at nine in the evening May 20, 78.—It seems intended to draw me out into those gardens for some bad purpose, as the person who pretended to have such urgent business with me has never since appeared, though (refusing to go out at that time of night) I appointed the next day at 11 o'clock."*

B. FRANKLIN.

Une personne qui auroit quelque chose de très intéressant et pressé à vous communiquer, désireroit, Monsieur, que vous voulussiez bien lui donner un moment pour lui procurer l'agrément de s'entretenir avec vous sur ce dont il s'agit.

L'on sait que vous venez quelquefois au *jardin des eaux*,\* et comme l'on ne veut être aperçu d'aucun de vos gens (et que l'on a des raisons très fortes pour cela), l'on s'est transporté ici tout exprès de Paris, dans l'espoir que l'on aura l'avantage de vous voir et de vous parler d'objet d'autant plus important qu'il concerne des personnes distinguées.

ANSWER TO A LETTER FROM BRUSSELS.

SIR,

Passy, July 1, 1778.

My vanity might possibly be flattered by your expressions of compliment to my understanding, if your proposals did not more clearly manifest a mean opinion of it.

\* So called as containing the spring of the mineral waters of PASSY.

You conjure me, in the name of the omniscient and just God, before whom I must appear, and by my hopes of future fame, to consider if some expedient cannot be found to put a stop to the desolation of America, and prevent the miseries of a general war. As I am conscious of having taken every step in my power to prevent the breach, and no one to widen it, I can appear cheerfully before that God, fearing nothing from his justice in this particular, though I have much occasion for his mercy in many others. As to my future fame, I am content to rest it on my past and present conduct, without seeking an addition to it in the crooked, dark paths you propose to me; where I should most certainly lose it. This your solemn address would therefore have been more properly made to your sovereign and his venal parliament. He and they, who wickedly began and madly continue a war for the desolation of America, are alone accountable for the consequences.

You endeavor to impress me with a bad opinion of French faith; but the instances of their friendly endeavors to serve a race of weak princes, who by their own imprudence defeated every attempt to promote their interest, weigh but little with me, when I consider the steady friendship of France to the thirteen United States of Switzerland, which has now continued inviolate two hundred years. You tell me that she will certainly cheat us, and that she despises us already. I do not believe that she will cheat us, and I am not certain that she despises us; but I see clearly that you are endeavoring to cheat us by your conciliatory bills; that you actually despised our understandings when you flattered yourselves those artifices would succeed; and that not only France,

but all Europe, yourselves included, most certainly and for ever would despise us if we were weak enough to accept your insidious propositions.

Our expectations of the future grandeur of America are not so magnificent, and therefore not so vain or visionary, as you represent them to be. The body of our people are not merchants, but humble husbandmen, who delight in the cultivation of their lands; which, from their fertility, and the variety of our climates, are capable of furnishing all the necessities and conveniences of life without external commerce. And we have too much land to have the least temptation to extend our territory by conquest from peaceable neighbors, as well as too much justice to think of it. Our militia, you find by experience, are sufficient to defend our lands from invasion; and the commerce with us will be defended by all the nations who find an advantage in it. We, therefore, have not the occasion you imagine of fleets or standing armies, but may leave those expensive machines to be maintained for the pomp of princes, and the wealth of ancient states. We propose, if possible, to live in peace with all mankind; and after you have been convinced to your cost, that there is nothing to be got by attacking us, we have reason to hope that no other power will judge it prudent to quarrel with us, lest they divert us from our own quiet industry, and turn us into corsairs preying upon theirs. The weight therefore of an independent empire, which you seem so certain of our inability to bear, will not be so great as you imagine. The expense of our civil government we have always borne, and can easily bear, because it is small. A virtuous and laborious people may be cheaply governed. De-



termining, as we do, to have no offices of profit, nor any sinecures or useless appointments, so common in ancient and corrupted states, we can govern ourselves a year for the sum you pay in a single department, or for what one jobbing contractor, by the favor of a minister, can cheat you out of in a single article.

You think we flatter ourselves, and are deceived into an opinion that England *must* acknowledge our independency. We, on the other hand, think you flatter yourselves in imagining such an acknowledgment a vast boon which we strongly desire, and which you may gain some great advantage by granting or withholding. We have never asked it of you. We only tell you, that you can have no treaty with us but as an independent state; and you may please yourselves and your children with the rattle of your right to govern us, as long as you have done with that of your king's being king of France, without giving us the least concern, if you do not attempt to exercise it. That this pretended right is indisputable, as you say, we utterly deny. Your parliament never had a right to govern us, and your king has forfeited it by his bloody tyranny. But I thank you for letting me know a little of your mind, that even if the parliament should acknowledge our independency, the act would not be binding to posterity, and that your nation would resume and prosecute the claim as soon as they found it convenient from the influence of your passions, and your present malice against us. We suspected before, that you would not be actually bound by your conciliatory acts longer than till they had served their purpose of inducing us to disband our forces; but we were not certain that you were knaves by principle, and

that we ought not to have the least confidence in your offers, promises, or treaties, though confirmed by parliament. I now indeed recollect my being informed long since, when in England, that a certain very great personage, then young, studied much a certain book entitled *Arcana Imperii*. I had the curiosity to procure the book, and read it. There are sensible and good things in it, but some bad ones; for if I remember right, a particular king is applauded for his politically exciting a rebellion among his subjects at a time when they had not strength to support it, that he might in subduing them take away their privileges which were troublesome to him: and a question is formally stated and discussed, "Whether a prince, who, to appease a revolt, makes promises of indemnity to the revolvers, is obliged to fulfil those promises?" Honest and good men would say ay: but this politician says, as you say,—no. And he gives this pretty reason, that though it was right to make the promises, because otherwise revolt would not be suppressed; yet it would be wrong to keep them, because revolvers ought to be punished to deter future revolts. If these are the principles of your nation, no confidence can be placed in you, it is in vain to treat with you, and the wars can only end in being reduced to an utter inability of continuing them.

One main drift of your letter seems to be to impress me with an idea of your own impartiality, by just censures of your ministers and measures, and to draw from me propositions of peace, or approbations of those you have enclosed me, which you intimate may, by your means, be conveyed to the king directly, without the intervention of those ministers.

Would you have me give them to, or drop them for, a stranger I may find next Monday in the church of Notre Dame, to be known by a rose in his hat? You yourself, sir, are quite unknown to me, you have not trusted me with your name. Our taking the least step towards a treaty with England through you, might, if you are an enemy, be made use of to ruin us with our new and good friends. I may be indiscreet enough in many things; but certainly if I were disposed to make propositions, (which I cannot do, having none committed to me to make,) I should never think of delivering them to the Lord knows who, to be carried to the Lord knows where, to serve no one knows what purposes. Being at this time one of the most remarkable figures in Paris, even my appearance in the church of Notre Dame, where I cannot have any conceivable business, and especially being seen to leave or drop any letter to any person there, would be a matter of some speculation, and might, from the suspicions it must naturally give, have very mischievous consequences to our credit here. The very proposing of a correspondence so to be managed, in a manner not necessary where *fair dealing* is intended, gives just reason to suppose you intend *the contrary*. Besides, as your court has sent commissioners to treat with the congress, with all the powers that would be given them by the crown under the act of parliament, what *good purpose* can be served by privately obtaining propositions from us? Before those commissioners went, we might have treated in virtue of our general powers, (with the knowledge, advice, and approbation of our friends,) upon any propositions made to us. But under the present circumstances, for us to make propositions

while a treaty is supposed to be actually on foot with the congress, would be extremely improper, highly presumptuous with regard to our honorable constituents, and answer no good end whatever.

I write this letter to you notwithstanding (which I think I can convey in a less mysterious manner, and think it may come to your hands); I write it because I would let you know our sense of your procedure, which appears as insidious as that of your conciliatory bills. Your true way to obtain peace, if your ministers desire it, is to propose openly to the congress fair and equal terms; and you may possibly come sooner to a resolution, when you find that personal flatteries, general cajolings, and panegyrics on our *virtue* and *wisdom*, are not likely to have the effect you seem to expect, the persuading us to act *basely* and *foolishly* in betraying our country and posterity into the hands of our most bitter enemies, giving up or selling of our arms and warlike stores, dismissing our ships of war and troops, and putting those enemies in possession of our forts and ports. This proposition of delivering ourselves bound and gagged, ready for hanging, without even a right to complain, and without a friend to be found afterwards among all mankind, you would have us embrace upon the faith of an act of parliament! Good God! an act of your parliament!! This demonstrates that you do not yet know us, and that you fancy we do not know you: but it is not merely this flimsy faith that we are to act upon: you offer us *hope*, the hope of PLACES, PENSIONS, and PEERAGES. These, judging from yourselves, you think are motives irresistible. This offer to corrupt us, sir, is with me your credential, and convinces me that you are not a private

volunteer in your application. It bears the stamp of British court intrigue, and the signature of your king. But think for a moment in what light it must be viewed in America. By PLACES which cannot come among us, for you take care, by a special article, to keep them to yourselves. We must then pay the salaries in order to enrich ourselves with these places. But you will give us PENSIONS; probably to be paid too out of your expected American revenue; and which none of us can accept without deserving, and perhaps obtaining, a *suspension*. PEERAGES! alas! sir, our long observation of the vast servile majority of your peers voting constantly for every measure proposed by a minister, however weak or wicked, leaves us small respect for them; and we consider it as a sort of tar-and-feather honor, or a mixture of foulness and folly; which every man among us who should accept from your king, would be obliged to renounce or exchange for that conferred by the mobs of their own country, or wear it with everlasting shame.

I am, sir, your humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO JAMES LOVELL, ESQ.

SIR,

Passy, July 22, 1778.

Mr. Deane is I hope with you long before this time, and I doubt not but every prejudice against him is removed. It was not alone upon the proceedings of congress I formed my opinion that such prejudices existed. I am glad to understand that opinion was groundless; and that he is like to come back with honor, in the commission to Holland, where matters are already so ripe for his operations,

that he cannot fail (with his abilities) of being useful.

There has been some inaccuracy in sending us the last dispatches of the committee; two copies of the contract with Mr. Francy and the invoices came by the same vessel, Captain Niles. And though one of your letters mentions sending enclosed a resolution of congress relative to two articles of the treaty, that resolution is not come to hand. There are circumstances in the affairs of those articles that make them in my opinion of no consequence if they stand, while the proposing to abrogate them has an unpleasing appearance, as it looks like a desire of having it in our power to make that commercial kind of war, which no honest state can begin, which no good friend or neighbor ever did or will begin, which has always been considered as an act of hostility that provoked as well as justified reprisals, and has generally produced such as have rendered the first object as unprofitable as it was unjust. Commerce among nations as well as between private persons should be fair and equitable, by *equivalent* exchanges and mutual supplies: the taking unfair advantage of a neighbor's necessities, though attended with a temporary success, always breeds ill blood: to lay duties on a commodity exported which our friends want, is a knavish attempt to get something for nothing. The statesman who first invented it, had the genius of a pickpocket, and would have been a pickpocket, if fortune had suitably placed him; the nations who have practised it have suffered for it fourfold, as pickpockets ought to suffer. Savoy, by a duty on exported wines, lost the supplying of Switzerland, which thenceforth raised its own wine, and

(to wave other instances) Britain, by her duty on exported tea, has lost the trade of her colonies. But as we produce no commodity that is peculiar to our country, and which may not be obtained elsewhere; the discouraging ours by duties on exportation, and thereby encouraging a rivalry from other nations in the ports we trade to, is absolute folly, which indeed is mixed more or less with some knavery. For my own part, if my protest were of any consequence, I should protest against our ever doing it, even by way of reprisal. It is a meanness with which I would not dirty the conscience or character of my country. The objections stated against the last of the two articles, had all been made, considered here, and were sent hence, I imagine, by one who is offended that they were not thought of weight sufficient to stop the signing of the treaty, till the king should, in another council, reconsider those articles, and, after agreeing to omit them, order new copies to be drawn, though all was then ready engrossed on parchment as before settled. I did not think the articles of much consequence, but I thought it of consequence that no delay should be given to the signing of the treaty after it was ready. But if I had known those objections would have been sent to the committee, I should have sent the answers they received, which had been satisfactory to *all* the commissioners, when the treaty was settled, and until the mind of one of them was altered by the opinion of two other persons. It is now too late to send those answers. But I wish for the future, if such a case should again happen, that congress would acquaint their commissioners with such partial objections, and hear their reasons, before they determine they have done

wrong. In the mean time, this is only to you in private. It will be of no use to communicate it, as the resolution of congress will probably be received and executed before this letter comes to hand.

Speaking of commissioners in the plural, puts me in mind of inquiring if it can be the intention of congress to keep *three* ambassadors at this court? we have indeed *four*, with the gentleman intended for Tuscany, who continues here, and is very angry that he was not consulted in making the treaty, which he could have mended in several particulars; and perhaps he is angry with some reason, if the instructions to him do, as he says they do, require us to consult him. We shall soon have a *fifth*; for the envoy to Vienna not being received there, is, I hear, returning hither. The necessary expense of maintaining us all, is, I assure you, enormously great: I wish the utility may equal it: I imagine every one of us spends nearly as much as Lord Stormont did. It is true he left behind him the character of a niggard; and when the advertisement appeared for the sale of his household furniture, all Paris laughed at an article of it, perhaps very innocently expressed: "*Une grande quantité de linge de table, QUI N'A JAMAIS SERVI.*"—" *Cela est très-vraisemblable,*" say they, "*car il n'a jamais donné à manger.*"—But as to our number, whatever advantage there might be in the joint counsels of three for framing and adjusting the articles of the treaty, there can be none in managing the common business of a resident here. On the contrary, all the advantages in negotiation that result from secrecy of sentiment, and uniformity in expressing it, and in common business, from dispatch, are lost. In a court, too, where every word is



watched and weighed, if a number of commissioners do not every one hold the same language, in giving their opinion on any public transaction, this lessens their weight; and where it may be prudent to put on or avoid certain appearances, of concern, for example, or indifference, satisfaction, or dislike, where the utmost sincerity and candor should be used, and would gain credit, if no semblance of art showed itself in the inadvertent discourse perhaps of only one of them, the hazard is equal to the number: and where every one must be consulted on every particular of common business, in answering every letter, &c. and one of them is offended if the smallest thing is done without his consent, the difficulty of being often and long enough together, the different opinions, and the time consumed in debating them, the interruption of new applicants in the time by meeting, &c. &c. occasion so much postponing and delay, that correspondence languishes, occasions are lost, and the business is always behind-hand. I have mentioned the difficulty of being often and long enough together: this is considerable, where they cannot all be accommodated in the same house: but to find three people whose tempers are so good, and who like so well one another's company, and manner of living and conversing, as to agree well themselves, though being in one house, and whose servants will not, by their indiscretion, quarrel with one another, and by artful misrepresentations draw their masters in to take their parts, to the disturbance of necessary harmony; these are difficulties still greater, and almost insurmountable: and in consideration of the whole, I wish the congress would separate us.

The Spanish galeons, which have been impatiently

expected, are at length happily arrived. The fleet and army returning from Brazil is still out, but supposed to be on the way homewards. When that and the South Sea ships are arrived, it will appear whether Spain's accession to the treaty has been delayed for the reasons given, or whether the reasons were only given to excuse the delay.

The English and French fleets, of nearly equal force, are now both at sea. It is not doubted but that if they meet there will be a battle. For though England, through fear, affects to understand it to be still peace, and excuses the depredations she has made on the commerce of France by pretences of illicit trade, &c. yet France considers the war as begun from the time of the king's message to parliament, complaining of the insult France had given by treating with us, and demanding aids to resent it, and the answers of both houses offering their lives and fortunes, and the taking several frigates, are deemed indisputable hostilities. Accordingly, orders are given to all the fleets and armed ships to return hostilities, and encouragement is offered to privateers, &c. An ambassador from Spain is indeed gone to London, and joyfully received there, in the idea that peace may be made by his mediation. But as yet we learn nothing certain of his mission, and doubt his effecting any thing of the kind.

War in Germany seems to be inevitable; and this occasioning great borrowings of money in Holland and elsewhere, by the powers concerned, makes it more difficult for us to succeed in ours. With great esteem, I have the honor to be, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

*Letter in answer to the propositions of quitting the  
alliance with France.*

Supposed to be to DAVID HARTLEY, Esq.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, Feb. 3, 1779.

I have just received your favor of the 23d past, in which you mention, "that the alliance between France and America is the great stumbling-block in the way of making peace;" and you go on to observe, that "whatever engagements America may have entered into, they may, at least by the consent of parties, *be relinquished*, for the purpose of removing so material an obstacle to any general treaty of free and unengaged parties." Adding, that "if the parties could meet for the sake of peace upon *free* and *open* ground, you should think *that* a very fair proposition to be offered to the people of England, and an equitable proposition in itself." The long, steady, and kind regard you have shown for the welfare of America by the whole tenor of your conduct in parliament, satisfies me that this proposition never took its rise with you, but has been suggested from some other quarter; and that your excess of humanity, your love of peace, and your fear for us that the destruction we are threatened with will certainly be effected, have thrown a mist before your eyes, which hindered you from seeing the malignity and mischief of it. We know that your K. hates Whigs and Presbyterians; that he thirsts for our blood; of which he has already drunk large draughts; that weak and unprincipled ministers are ready to execute the wickedest of his orders, and his venal parliament equally ready to vote them just. Not the smallest appearance of a reason can be

imagined capable of inducing us to think of relinquishing a solid alliance with one of the most amiable as well as most powerful princes of Europe, for the expectation of unknown terms of peace to be afterwards offered to us by *such a government*;—a government that has already shamefully broken all the compacts it ever made with us. This is worse than advising us to drop the substance for the shadow. The dog, after he found his mistake, might possibly have recovered his mutton; but we could never hope to be trusted again by France, or indeed by any other nation under heaven. Nor does there appear any more necessity for dissolving an alliance with France before you can treat with us, than there would of dissolving your alliance with Holland, or your union with Scotland, before we could treat with you. Ours is therefore no *material obstacle* to a treaty, as you suppose it to be. Had Lord North been the author of such a proposition, all the world would have said it was insidious, and meant only to deceive and divide us from our friends, and then to ruin us; supposing our fears might be strong enough to procure an acceptance of it. But, thanks to God, that is not the case! We have long since settled all the account in our own minds. We know the worst you can do to us, if you have your wish, is to confiscate our estates and take our lives, to rob and murder us; and this you have seen we are ready to hazard, rather than come again under your detested government.

You must observe, my dear friend, that I am a little warm. Excuse me! 'Tis over. Only let me counsel you not to think of being sent hither on so fruitless an errand as that of making such a proposition.

It puts me in mind of the comic farce intitled *God-send, or the Wreckers*. You may have forgotten it; but I will endeavor to amuse you by recollecting a little of it.

Scene—*Mount's Bay*. A ship riding at anchor in a great storm. A lee shore full of rocks, and lined with people, furnished with axes and carriages to cut up wrecks, knock the sailors on the head, and carry off the plunder; *according to custom*.

*1st Wrecker*. This ship rides it out longer than I expected. She must have good ground tackle.

*2d Wrecker*. We had better send off a boat to her, and persuade her to take a pilot, who can afterwards run her a-shore, where we can best come at her.

*3d Wrecker*. I doubt whether the boat can live in this sea. But if there are any brave fellows willing to hazard themselves for the good of the public, and a double share,—let them say ay.

*Several Wreckers*. I, I, I, I.

*The boat goes off, and comes under the ship's stern.*

*Spokesman*. So ho, the ship, ahoy!

*Captain*. Hulloo.

*Sp*. Would you have a pilot?

*Capt*. No, no!

*Sp*. It blows hard, and you are in danger.

*Capt*. I know it.

*Sp*. Will you buy a better cable? we have one in the boat here.

*Capt*. What do you ask for it?

*Sp*. Cut that you have, and then we'll talk about the price of this.

*Capt*. I shall do no such foolish thing. I have lived in your parish formerly, and know the heads of ye too well to trust ye: keep off from my cable

there; I see you have a mind to cut it yourselves. If you go any nearer to it, I'll fire into you and sink you.

*Sp.* It is a damn'd rotten French cable, and will part of itself in half an hour. Where will you be then, captain? you had better take our offer.

*Capt.* You offer nothing, you rogues, but treachery and mischief. My cable is good and strong, and will hold long enough to baulk all your projects.

*Sp.* You talk unkindly, captain, to people who came here only for your good.

*Capt.* I know you come for all our *goods*, but, by God's help, you shall have none of them. You shall not serve us as you did the Indiamen.

*Sp.* Come, my lads, let's be gone. This fellow is not so great a fool as we took him to be.

\* \* \* \*

TO DAVID HARTLEY, ESQ. M.P.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, Feb. 22, 1779.

I received your proposition for removing the stumbling-block. Your constant desires of peace ought to endear you to both sides; but this proposition seems to be naturally impracticable. We can never think of quitting a solid alliance made and ratified, in order to be in a state for receiving unknown proposals of peace which may vanish in the discussion. The truth is, we have no kind of faith in your government, which appears to us as insidious and deceitful, as it is unjust and cruel. Its character is that of the *spider* in Thompson,—

————— cunning and fierce,  
Mixture abhorr'd!

Besides, we cannot see the necessity of our relinquishing our alliance with France in order to a treaty,

any more than of your relinquishing yours with Holland. I am, very affectionately, yours,

N. A.\*

TO DAVID HARTLEY, ESQ. M.P.

DEAR SIR,

Passy, March 21, 1779.

I am sorry you have had so much trouble in the affair of the prisoners. You have been deceived as well as we. No cartel ship has yet appeared, and it is now evident that the delays have been of design, to give more opportunity of seducing the men by promises and hardships to seek their liberty in engaging against their country. For we learn from those who have escaped, that there are persons continually employed in cajoling and menacing them, representing to them that we neglect them, that your government is willing to exchange them, and that it is our fault it is not done ; that all the news from America is bad on their side ; we shall be conquered, and they will be hanged, if they do not accept the gracious offer of being pardoned on condition of serving the king, &c. A great part of your prisoners have been kept these six months on board a ship in Brest Road, ready to be delivered ; where I am afraid they were not so comfortably accommodated as they might have been in the French prisons. They are now ordered on shore. Doctor Bancroft has received your letter here. He did not go to Calais.†

Knowing how earnestly and constantly you wish

\* North America.

† It had been intended that Dr. Bancroft should proceed to England with a power from Dr. Franklin to negotiate an exchange of prisoners ; but some difficulty having arisen, of which Mr. Hartley's letter contained an intimation, that journey did not take place.

for peace, I cannot end a letter to you without dropping a word on that subject, to mark that my wishes are still in unison with yours. After the barbarities your nation has exercised against us, I am almost ashamed to own that I feel sometimes for her misfortunes and her insanities. Your veins are open, and your best blood continually running. You have now got a little army into Georgia, and are triumphing in that success. Do you expect ever to see that army again? I know not what General Lincoln or General Thompson may be able to effect against them; but if they stay through the summer in that climate, there is a certain General Fever that I apprehend will give a good account of most of them. Perhaps you comfort yourselves that our loss of blood is as great as yours. But, as physicians say, there is a great difference in the facility of repairing that loss, between an old body and a young one. America adds to her numbers annually 150,000 souls. She therefore grows faster than you can diminish her, and will outgrow all the mischief you can do her. Have you the same prospects? But it is unnecessary for me to represent to you, or you to me, the mischiefs each nation is subjected to by the war: we all see clear enough the nonsense of continuing it; the difficulty is where to find sense enough to put an end to it. Adieu, my dear friend, and believe me, &c.

B. FRANKLIN.

TO DR. COOPER.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

Passy, April 22, 1779.

The depreciation of our money must, as you observe, greatly affect salary men, widows, and orphans. Methinks this evil deserves the attention of the several legislatures, and ought if possible to be



remedied by some equitable law, particularly adapted to their circumstances. I took all the pains I could in congress to prevent the depreciation, by proposing, first, that the bills should bear interest: this was rejected, and they were struck as you see them. Secondly, after the first emission, I proposed that we should stop, strike no more, but borrow on interest those we had issued. This was not then approved of, and more bills were issued. When from the too great quantity they began to depreciate, we agreed to borrow on interest, and I proposed that in order to fix the value of the principal, the interest should be promised in hard dollars. This was objected to as impracticable: but I still continue of opinion, that by sending out cargoes to purchase it we might have brought in money sufficient for that purpose, as we brought in powder, &c. &c. And that though the attempt must have been attended with a disadvantage, the loss would have been a less mischief than any measure attending the discredit of the bills, which threatens to take out of our hands the great instrument of our defence. The congress did at last come into the proposal of paying the interest in real money. But when the whole mass of the currency was *under way* in depreciation, the momentum of its descent was too great to be stopped by a power that might at first have been sufficient to prevent the beginning of the motion. The *only remedy* now seems to be a diminution of the quantity by a vigorous taxation, of great *nominal sums*, which the people are more able to pay in proportion to the quantity and diminished value; and the *only consolation* under the evil is, that the public debt is proportionably diminished with the depreciation; and

this by a kind of imperceptible tax, every one having paid a part of it in the fall of value that took place between the receiving and paying such sums as passed through his hands. For it should always be remembered, that the original intention was to sink the bills by taxes, which would as effectually extinguish the debt as an actual redemption. This effect of paper currency is not understood on this side the water. And indeed the whole is a mystery even to the politicians, how we have been able to continue a war for four years without money, and how we could pay with paper that had no previously fixed fund appropriated specifically to redeem it. This currency, as we manage it, is a wonderful machine. It performs its office when we issue it; it pays and clothes troops, and provides victuals and ammunition; and, when we are obliged to issue a quantity excessive, it pays itself off by depreciation.

Our affairs in general stand in a fair light throughout Europe. Our cause is universally approved. Our constitutions of government have been translated and printed in most languages, and are so much admired for the spirit of liberty that reigns in them, that it is generally agreed we shall have a vast accession of national property after the war, from every part of this continent, and particularly from the British islands. We have only to persevere and to be happy.

Yours, &c. B. FRANKLIN.

END OF VOL. I.